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HARRIET MONSELL

A MEMOIR

REV. T. T. CARTER



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HARRIET MONSELL.



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HARRIET MONSELL.

A Memoir.

H. C. Doane

BY

THE REV. T. T. CARTER,

HON. CANON OF CH. CH. OXFORD;
AND WARDEN OF THE HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER.

*London Nov
20 1884*

True life grows on from small to great ;
Each year, each day, its increase lends
Nor is it the blind force of fate,
That earthly sorrow oft times blends
With the pure work of grace, the more to consecrate
The love which ever in its sacred yearnings
heavenward tends.

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TO
THE COMMUNITY OF S. JOHN BAPTIST
THESE RECORDS OF THE LIFE
OF
THEIR FIRST MOTHER SUPERIOR
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

I SHOULD be deeply grieved if to any one it appeared that there was an impropriety in bringing forward into public notice one whose memory is sacred in my own eyes, and in the eyes of all who knew her. And I must confess that in gathering materials for this Memoir I have at times been haunted by the fear, lest I were breaking through the reserve best becoming one whose life was spent partly within loving home circles, partly in a religious state, which implies yet greater hiddenness. And ordinarily woman is most honoured when least exposed to public notice. But there have been ever felt to be various exceptions to the rule, and among such exceptions the Church, if not the world also, has cherished, and desired to profit by, the examples of those who have been distinguished in the records of Religious Communities, or in any special form of religious devotion. It is on this account, because of important work done, and a high example given in the development of the Religious Life, that many have desired some record of the subject of this Memoir.

Not that her usefulness, or the value of her teaching and example, were confined to this sphere of life alone, for it was given to Harriet Monsell to fulfil a cycle of as many phases

of experience as can well fall to woman's lot. And she seems to have profited by the opportunities given to her in each in its appointed order. Brought up in a home where high and generous principles were rendered attractive by intellectual and social powers of no common kind, her character and natural gifts afterwards being elevated and matured through the sympathy of marriage and the chastening of widowhood, she was, while yet in the prime of life, drawn by the grace of GOD to a wholly self-devoted service, and for nearly a quarter of a century became absorbed in active labour for the good of souls, after which years of no ordinary suffering and infirmity followed, as if to chasten her yet more completely for the Presence of GOD. But Harriet Monsell's special distinction rests on her work as a Sister of Mercy, and the part she took in the formation and growth of a Religious Community.

It is not improbable that the prejudice still existing in England against the Religious Life may narrow the circle of those who are likely to be interested in this Memoir, but the time must surely come when such devotion will assume a truer value in the eyes at least of all who love our LORD, and in Him the souls of those for whom He died, and who desire to see Christianity put forth amongst us the fulness of its life and power. Nor can it be that objections which have arisen out of very different circumstances to those which can now exist among us, should always be felt against a system which all allow to be most influential in manifold works of mercy and benevolence. Whatever is new must necessarily take time to win its way to public confidence, and to the revival of what has been supposed to be past and gone, a greater

weight of prejudice may be expected than against what is simply novel. But that such a form of life is reconcilable with entire loyalty to the Church of England, that it implies no disparagement of domestic life, and that it has virtues and powers of usefulness peculiarly its own, and of inestimable value for their own sake,—is happily a growing belief.

Those who knew the subject of this Memoir, both within and without the circle of her Community life, have felt that if the example of any one thus dedicated might help to dissipate the prejudices and suspicions above alluded to, it would be given to her to effect this change ; for beside her special gifts of winning confidence and conciliating opposition, her sympathies embraced with like ardour and in truest simplicity both the Community and the domestic states of life.

If I may be permitted here to take a wider view of the subject, I would observe, that it is surprising that any who regard the Bible as their standard of God's purposes for His elect, and its sacred texts as the embodiment of Christian ideas, can suppose that social and domestic life, however true, however beautiful, exhibit the whole of the Religion which our LORD came to establish on earth. There are passages which open out forms of life and devotion which cannot be thus satisfied. Our Blessed LORD's words, after speaking of the virgin state, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it ;"¹ and again as to the devoted separated state, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife,

¹ S. Matt. xix. 12.

or children, or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life,"¹—imply conditions of life different from those fulfilled by home affections and home duties. And S. Paul, following his Master, shows how the Spirit of GOD drew the hearts of many in Apostolic days to consecrate themselves in the conviction of a special calling to such dedicated service, in which too the will of the parent coincided with the will of the child. "The unmarried woman," says the Apostle, "careth for the things of the LORD, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit ;"² or, as it is otherwise expressed, "that ye may attend upon the LORD without distraction ;"³ and this is connected with the idea that "every man hath his proper gift of GOD, one after this manner, and another after that ;"⁴ and this again is followed by the injunction, "let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with GOD."⁵ Such words imply the existence of dispositions and gifts in the soul distinct from those which make Christian homes such centres of holiness and love. They imply other forms and expressions of holiness and love, and though these might be cherished in solitude, or hidden in the midst of the world, the natural tendency of those thus called and inspired, is to associate together for mutual sympathy and support, as well as for greater usefulness through a common fellowship in works of mercy.

¹ S. Mark x. 29, 30.

² I Cor. vii. 34.

³ I Cor. vii. 35. See also verses 37, 38, for the action of parents.

⁴ I Cor. vii. 7.

⁵ I Cor. vii. 24.

Among women, Sisterhoods are the natural and necessary outcome of such drawings of the Spirit of GOD, and have been formed among us of late through an awakening of life instinct with a true Catholic and Apostolic spirit. Nor can it, I think, be denied that our LORD in the "days of His flesh" revealed this among other forms of life. In His own sacred Person He exhibited the example, not of one but of different forms of life,—He embraced and exhibited the contemplative and the active, the domestic and the missionary, the ascetic and the social. And while by "His Presence and first miracle which He wrought in Cana of Galilee, He adorned and beautified the holy estate of matrimony to signify and represent the mystical union which is betwixt Himself and His Church," so likewise in His own Person He adorned and beautified the virgin and devoted state, as specially His own. The Church was intended to represent CHRIST in His fulness. It cannot do so in any single individual, it can only do so in the different lives of different members of His Body. Each one is the complement of another. All together make up such completeness as is possible to be realised on earth. And our Christianity would be shorn of its power to represent CHRIST, if it ignored or disparaged any form which found in Him its image and representation. It would be an imperfect witness to the fulness of the grace which flows from His Incarnation.

Bishop Webb, speaking of the rationale of the devoted Sister's life, touches yet another chord of feeling, and opens a further view of her state, which he has expressed in very beautiful language, which I would claim the privilege of quoting.

"The Church of GOD," he says, "is called the 'Bride' of

CHRIST ; the idea representing weakness and dependence, joined with strength of devotion and self-surrender. This heavenly reality the Sister is especially called to represent ; though in speaking of this aspect of the life, we must be careful of our phraseology. In the Sisterhood life there is an *accentuating* of that calling, which in truth *belongs to the whole Church*, to be the '*Bride*' of CHRIST. The Sisters are not so '*brides*' of CHRIST as to exclude the rest of the Church, for the *whole Church* is the Bride ; but their part is, especially, to put forward this side of the deep Christian verity. As one part of the Church represents the Priesthood of the whole Church, another the royalty, another the teaching, and another the home life, the family,—which is a shadow upon earth of the Trinity above,—so the Sisterhood life represents and brings out into sharper relief in behalf of, with, for, and in the name of, the whole Church, that calling of the whole Church of CHRIST to be '*His holy Bride*;' to be absolutely His, at His disposal ; to feel the deepest attachment, and yield the most entire devotion to Him ; to live *for Him*, and for Him *only*."¹

Much has been said of late, and much that I cannot but deem needlessly alarming and unreasonable, on the vexed question of vows. At the late Reading Congress, at the end of the morning's debate in the large Congress Hall, on the comparative merits of the Sisterhood and the Deaconess principles, it was generally felt that they agreed in representing the self-devotion intended in either state as lifelong. And a vow is but the outward expression of a lifelong

¹ "Sisterhood Life and Woman's Work." By the Right Rev. Allan Beecher Webb, D.D., Bishop of Graham's Town. Pp. 64, 5.

devotion. It simply implies a vocation of GOD, according to which one so called should abide with Him to the end. Every safeguard indeed should be taken against possible error, but this may be ensured both on the side of the Community, and that of its members, if there be, according to long established principle, a sufficient testing, wisely regulated authority, and a recognised system of dispensation.

Nor can I see any sufficient reason why between domestic and Community life there should be invidious comparisons. Differences of vocation is an universal law of GOD. The order of grace, like the order of nature, fulfils itself in diversity of gifts and of operations. "One star differeth from another star in glory;"¹ and "the heavens," studded with these varied orbs of light, "declare the glory of GOD," all the more because of their diversity. So on earth likewise, on the contrasted beauty of the forest and the garden, the tree and the flower, the mountains and the valleys, and their varieties of form and colour, depends the loveliness of nature. The eye resents sameness. It is the wonderful harmonising of the different kinds and features of glory, and of beauty, none at variance with the other, each contributing something to the general effect, which causes the outer world to be such a magnificent expression of the mind and character of Him Who is Infinite, and Who is the more glorified in Himself because of the diversity of Person and Attribute. Why should we not look for this to be fulfilled in the spiritual as well as in the natural world, and thus each regard the other, according to their several vocations, with mutual respect, and sympathy, and love?

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 41.

The Pharisaic spirit, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou,"¹ has no existence in the mind of CHRIST, nor ought it to have any in the mind of the disciple. The Love of GOD is the highest standard that can be reached, the holiest law that can be lived, and His Love may be perfected in any state of life to which He may vouchsafe to call His servants. He gives to each the talents, wherewith to "occupy till He comes." "He divideth to every one severally as He will."² And His gifts are not to exalt the individual, but to perfect the Body of CHRIST. In the zealous use of appointed gifts in one's appointed lot, is the only lawful competition in the kingdom of GOD; each ministering to the one LORD, each filling up his measure of the life and the work which in its completed circle is to reflect and to reveal the CHRIST.

I shall be amply rewarded if these pages serve in any degree to lead to a better understanding of principles which have been much questioned, and greatly misunderstood, so that there may be among us a truer "following of the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another,"³ while we more and more learn to live "no longer unto ourselves, but unto Him Who died for us and rose again."⁴

T. T. C.

S. JOHN'S LODGE, CLEWER,

Vigil of the Feast of the Annunciation,

1884.

¹ Isa. lxv. 5.

² 1 Cor. xii. 11.

³ Rom. xiv. 19.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 15.

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Chapter the First.

HARRIET O'BRIEN'S EARLY LIFE.

*"In soft childhood's heart will Virtue spring
Unheeded, there to drink celestial air,
And all the thoughts to her obedience bring,
Nourished day after day with dews of prayer,
Unseen, unknown."*

The Baptistry.

HARRIET O'Brien belonged to one of the oldest families in Ireland. Her father, Sir Edward O'Brien, Bart., of Dromoland, Co. Clare, did not himself inherit the title now borne by his descendants; but eighteen years after his death, his son became Lord Inchiquin, the elder branch failing in the late Marquis of Thomond, on whose death the Marquisate became extinct, and the Barony alone passed to the next heir.

The O'Briens of Dromoland were always attached to the Established Church. They were much engaged in politics, Sir Edward representing his county in Parliament, as one of the family had done continuously for generations. At the general election of 1826 Sir Edward gave up his seat in favour of his son, and retiring from public life, dwelt among his own people, a quiet country gentleman, occupied in the improvement of his large estate. During his later years he was in feeble health. He is described by those who knew

him well, as a man of noble, generous feelings, and of a gentle and kindly nature.

Lady O'Brien was a sincerely religious woman, and on principle a very strict disciplinarian; her absorbing thought being to bring up her children according to what she believed to be the best teaching of the Evangelical School. She took great pains with them, and was especially careful in making them study the Bible, learn Hymns, &c. She was very kind to the poor, and practical in her methods of assisting them; among other designs, it was her wont to have the women and children on the estate taught embroidery, with the view of enabling them afterwards to earn their living.

Dromoland is a beautiful country seat, with an extensive park, a lake, and very varied grounds, richly wooded. The situation is retired, but familiarity with the ways of the world, and the intellectual movements of the time, was kept up by the O'Brien family through the two elder sons who were in Parliament, and the two younger ones who were Cambridge men. There were also several gifted and religiously-minded families in the neighbourhood,—among them the Dunravens, the De Veres, and the Monsells,—between whom and the Dromoland party a very frequent intercourse was maintained.

Such were the surroundings and the influences acting on Harriet O'Brien, as she grew up. She was born in 1811, the youngest but two of nine children, the third of four daughters. She is described as a most joyous child, full of spring and merriment. "Bright-haired, bright-voiced, bright-hearted," were the epithets applied to her in early days by a friend of the family. Another, a frequent visitor at Dromoland, speaks of the life of the sisters generally, as

“a bright, happy, girlish life, Harriet being the sunniest of the four.” But Harriet, as a child, gave no signs of any special mental capacity. Indeed she is said to have been a very unpromising pupil in the schoolroom, and some of her governesses spoke of her as a hopeless subject. She made nothing of music, and though in after years, when travelling in Italy, she developed considerable talent in water-colour drawing, and acquired a ready skill which stood her in good stead as a restful recreation in the midst of absorbing labours, as a child she took but little to drawing. The one thing in the way of learning to which she gave her mind, was needlework ; and she wrote a good hand. She delighted in outdoor exercises,—the freedom and beauty of her country home were to her a ceaseless joy. With her brothers she was a special favourite, taking great pleasure in riding, in which she acquitted herself well, and sympathising in all their manly pursuits. She seldom, if ever, went far from home, but there were abundant means of recreation at hand,—riding, driving, boating, and frequent pic-nics,—the brothers and sisters themselves forming a considerable party, and Dromoland being a centre where a large circle of friends constantly gathered. With all this enjoyment were mixed more serious occupations, and, beside intellectual pursuits, the sisters were not lacking in the care of the poor people, and the school children.

Harriet O'Brien in her earliest childhood seems thus to have had but a desultory education, and this apparently from no fault of her parents. Many years afterwards, when, as Superior of her Community, she was giving directions as to teaching the children of an Orphanage under her care, she was heard to say, “that she wished she had had as regular an education in her childhood.” But probably she

then learnt more than her teachers gave her credit for, or she herself was aware of, as in later years she showed not a little facility in getting at the pith of a book, as well as in what she termed, "picking the brains" of any one who knew a subject in which she was interested.

When she was thirteen years old, there came a change, the account of which may be given in her own words. "I had been accustomed to hear only, 'Harriet can do nothing,' and one day I heard one of my aunts say, 'If I were Harriet, with a head on my shoulders, and a pair of hands, I would not have it said of me, I was so stupid.' This roused me, and from that time I began to think, why it was that I could not do as others did."

The working of her mind about that period may further be judged of from what she used to recall among the reminiscences of her girlhood, and which one of the Sisters thus narrates; "The dear Mother told me once that she had always had the wish to do anything she took in hand as well as it could possibly be done, and described how when quite a little girl, she used to draw or copy maps (I forget which,) for her father, and when she showed them to him and asked, 'Is that right?' he would sometimes say, 'That will do very well.' You would have seen me at this go off to a corner alone; I could not rest till I had made it as perfect as I could. It vexed me to have it said, 'it will do,' and roused my determination."

The Sister adds; "Once when talking of the great differences of mental activity in various temperaments, she said, 'For myself I have had to discipline and check too much thought, I do not think now so much as I used to do. When quite a little child, I loved sometimes to get away from play, to follow up and work out my thoughts. Some-

times during a long drive when I was generally all life and chatter, I would be quite silent, thinking, and the others would perhaps say, Harriet is in the sulks again.'"

Whatever may have been the neglect of learning and want of industry, through the impulses of a merry joyous nature, there were qualities in her which greatly attracted and attached to her all who came to the house. She became noted both in her family, and among the visitors, for the unselfish and unselfconscious spirit with which she would throw herself into everybody's needs, interests, and amusements. Her ever-ready kindly thoughtfulness for others, rich and poor, young and old, alike; her quick loving sympathy for their joys and sorrows, shed an unfailing brightness all around her. And an unmistakable power moreover showed itself as she grew to maturity, though it might be in mere passing incidents, for she was distinguished among her sisters and their friends for a fertile wit in settling their plans; as well as for her ingenuity in justifying the advice she gave. "Let us get Harriet to decide," was what a frequent companion in the genial amusements of that bright home calls a "standing expression," when doubts arose as to minor questions of daily employment.

As years advanced she showed yet more valuable qualities, and a deeper aspect of her character is spoken of by a visitor at Dromoland already referred to, who describes her as being "like a mother to the children of the family, a real sunbeam, the best of nurses, and the most sympathetic of friends in sickness."

Higher thoughts too, there must have been growing beneath the joyous laughter, probably not apparent at the time; for a few days before her death, she remarked casually, that "some of the most fervent Communions she ever made,

were in the little church, (and it was anything but an attractive one) to which they went from Dromoland."

All the sisters had a practical turn; they could set their hands to various household tasks, and make themselves very generally useful. Harriet was ever forward in all such schemes, and for general aptitude and quickness was specially distinguished. But to an intimate friend of those days it seemed, that "of the four sisters she was the least likely to make a name for herself in her future life."

The bright, happy home which had thus nurtured her, broke up on the death of her father, in 1837. Harriet was then twenty-six years old. After this, the mother and daughters for a while led rather a wandering life. They went first to London, then to a watering-place, afterwards they paid visits in Dublin, and other places in Ireland. It was not long before the sisters became scattered. One married the Rev. the Hon. Charles Amyand Harris, destined after many years to be again closely associated with her sister Harriet, under very changed circumstances, at Clewer. A second married the Rev. Arthur Martineau. One remained single. Harriet herself became engaged, and was married, in the course of the year 1839.

Her marriage was one of more than ordinary eventfulness, both in itself and in its consequences, whether we consider the development of her character, or of her powers of usefulness in the service of God,—a brief, though critical, period, of a little more than twelve years, during which she tasted the keenest, purest joy, to be followed at its close by the opening of the springs of the profoundest sorrow. But this naturally forms the beginning of a new chapter in her history, and needs to be dealt with separately.

Chapter the Second.

HARRIET O'BRIEN'S MARRIED LIFE.

*"O spread Thy pure wing o'er them,
Let no ill power find place,
When onward to Thine Altar
The hallowed path they trace,
To cast their crowns before Thee
In perfect sacrifice,
Till to the home of gladness
With Christ's own Bride they rise."*

KEBLE.

HARRIET O'Brien, as already stated, had reached her twenty-sixth year when the Dromoland home was broken up, and the mother and daughters went to live for a short time in Dublin. There is a portrait of Harriet O'Brien taken at that time which represents her as slim in figure, with curled auburn hair, and a ruddy, radiant countenance. It is a touching representation of her womanhood, with its freshness and brightness as yet untouched by anxiety or sorrow, and before the deeper elements of character had been drawn out and developed.

In the early spring of 1839, during the visit in Dublin, she became acquainted with her future husband. They first met at a friend's house, and the acquaintance then casually commenced ripened quickly into an ardent mutual attach-

ment. Charles Monsell had come up to Dublin, with his father and mother, for the purpose of obtaining medical advice. When sufficiently recovered, he was recommended to go abroad, and he spent about six weeks of the summer in the north of Italy, afterwards rejoining his family in Dublin, while Lady O'Brien and her daughters were still there. By the time of his return the attachment had become formally known. Lady O'Brien at first objected, partly on account of his precarious state of health, partly because of the smallness of means ; and there had been an offer made previously when on a visit in England, which she, the mother, had thought to be more advantageous. But her daughter was clear and decided in her own purpose, and said to her mother, "I will never marry against your wishes, but if I don't marry Charles Monsell I won't marry anybody." The mother gave way ; there was no sufficient reason to counterbalance what all after experience proved to have been most true and deeply grounded affection on both sides, and with the concurrence of both families, on the 21st September of the same year, the marriage took place.

It is necessary to give a brief account of Charles Monsell and his family, for the influence which he had over his wife was of the most powerful kind ; the deepening of her character, and the growth of her spiritual life, becoming markedly manifest from the date of her marriage. He was the third son of Thomas Bewley Monsell, Archdeacon of Derry, and Rector of Dunboe, in the same county. The late Rector of Egham, the well-known and dearly loved Dr. Monsell, was one of his two elder brothers. Charles was born in 1815, and was of delicate health from his birth. On this account he was brought up at home, and there lived till he entered Trinity College, Dublin. He was pos-

sessed of considerable intellectual powers, but there was a mental indolence, the result of weak health, which hindered his making efforts to obtain honours at his University. He was originally intended for the bar, but when the time came for the final decision he resolved instead to devote himself to the service of the Church; an intention which was not carried out until after his marriage. Between leaving the University and his marriage he lived at home, giving himself to the study of Theology and English literature. The friend from whom these facts are derived, speaks of him as "a man of singular refinement, of a saintlike character, and of a highly cultivated taste."

It will give a more complete view of the new surroundings which awaited the young bride, to add to this account of her husband some notice of his home; for there she passed the earlier part of her married life, as an adopted member of the family.

The friend above quoted was a frequent visitor at Dunboe Rectory; in fact it was ever open to him as a boy, and the closest ties afterwards bound him to it. He thus describes it; "The parish of Dunboe, on the northern coast of Ireland, is wild and bleak, extending over a large tract of country, bounded on one side by the sea. The parsonage was its one bright spot, nestling in trees which sheltered it in some measure from the fierce winds. It looked on one side towards the sea, across which in clear weather the western islands of Scotland were visible. About the parsonage itself there was a charm, difficult to describe in words. More than any house I know, it was the abode of family love, intellectual cultivation, and innocent mirth, combined with simple piety and real devoutness. It was full of whatever could make a home attractive, so as to cast a spell upon all

who were drawn within its circle. It was plainly but comfortably furnished throughout, a very model of unostentatious comfort and order. As to its *personnel*, the Archdeacon was a churchman of the old school, whose character and opinions had been formed before the Church movement began; a staunch adherent of the Prayer Book and rubrics. When the 'Tracts for the Times' appeared, he thought it his duty to take a strong line against them, while the younger members of the family on the contrary regarded them favourably. He was a most courteous gentleman, of vigorous understanding, and had considerable weight among the clergy, not only of his own diocese, but of Ireland generally.

"Mrs. Monsell, the mother, was a woman of superior natural ability, with much conversational power, and shone in society, but her husband and her children were the objects of her entire devotion. A very remarkable harmony reigned within the house. The first thought of the parents was for the children, and the first thought of the children was to gratify and spare their parents in every possible way. The servants were considered and treated as members of the family, with which most of them had been long connected. All needful discipline was maintained,—I will not say, enforced,—for law was turned into love."

Dunboe must have seemed plain and homely in comparison with Dromoland, but Harriet Monsell used in after days to say how much she was impressed by the whole aspect and spirit of the place; and she would speak with loving reverence of the Archdeacon and his wife, "sitting in their two arm-chairs, on each side of the fireplace, while every one entering the room who possessed any

talent, or character, was drawn out by these quiet old people."

To this home Charles Monsell brought his bride immediately after their marriage, and there they remained as welcome guests till the spring of 1840.

The marriage proved to be a singularly happy one, although from the state of her husband's health clouds of coming sorrow were on the horizon, which some at least of those who prayed heartily for them on the day of their marriage must have anticipated as likely to gather round them after not many years.

In the spring of 1840 they moved to Oxford, Charles Monsell having decided to enter into Holy Orders, and going thither to attend the theological lectures. It was the period when the Oxford movement was at its zenith; when Newman's extraordinary influence was still paramount, though as yet no signs of the coming storm had appeared. They became acquainted with the leaders of the movement, chiefly with Dr. Pusey; and under their teaching Charles Monsell's theological opinions took the definite shape they retained to the end of his life. Dr. Pusey's influence was seen afterwards to have greatly predominated, and a close intercourse between him and them continued after the Oxford visit.

Charles Monsell, having been ordained by the Bishop of Derry, was licensed to his father's curacy. For about a year he and his wife thus lived again at the Dunboe parsonage. They left it to make a home of their own, on his being made Prebendary of Aghadoe, in Limerick Cathedral. From that time Limerick became their head-quarters, and more active work thus opened on Harriet Monsell, as well as on her husband.

There is nothing further of interest to record of their married life during this its earlier period, but the following extract from a letter of Harriet Monsell to a dear friend is not without its value, as showing the fitful uncertainty that hung about their future, while yet at the time the spring of hope, of home joys, and of active usefulness, filled their hearts with gladness. The letter is dated from Dromoland, where they were paying a short visit.

"For ourselves, I greatly rejoice in the thoughts of our home, though it will be some time before we go there, for having come to these southern parts, we think it will be better for Charles to wait to go to Fort Royal¹ till towards spring, and we shall remain here till perhaps the end of January. We have been a merry family party till now, but next week we shall be quieter for a little. Then we must go visiting some friends for a time, and then we shall return here. My own sister—the only one here—rejoices so in getting me, and it is so charming getting with one's own sister—there is nothing in the world like it except one's husband."

There is something sadly ominous in the last sentences of the letter.

"Charles is pretty well. Everybody compliments him on his good looks, but he feels the cold a good deal, and with a large party of gentlemen there is a constant temptation to him to walk and talk too much when out, which tries his chest."

After a brief interval, they settled into their new home, devoting themselves to their work. It was an eventful

¹ Fort Royal is a lovely place on the shore of Lough Swilly, where Charles Monsell's maternal uncle then lived. The married couple were due there on a visit.

change, bringing out fresh features of Harriet Monsell's character. Her energy and briskness, and practical ability, had for the first time a free course in the fulfilment of responsible duties, and the care of the household, while possessed of but narrow means. Her affections were drawn out in a way they had never been before, ripening into that overflowing sympathy, which afterwards became so great a power in GOD's service. There was not infrequent anxiety as to her husband's health, which gave scope to her practical resources, and kept in constant play her watchful self-sacrifice. Her husband's example and lofty tone of piety were continually acting upon her, all the more as they were bound together by the fondest possible love, and on her part the most child-like reverence towards him. There were moreover, during that time of their residence in Limerick, deep searchings of heart as to the grounds of faith on which Charles Monsell and his wife were quite agreed, for there was much anxiety as to the stability of some very near and valued friends who afterwards joined the secession, which took place on Newman's submission to Rome. Charles and his wife stood firm through the troubles; keeping the old lines, which they had learned at Oxford, and which formed the real ground of the Oxford movement,—Holy Scripture interpreted by Catholic and Apostolic tradition, as against modern developments. The deep questions stirred during that troubled time, especially when those whom they dearly loved were likely to separate from them on vital points of belief, must have tended to exercise all their powers both of heart and intellect in no ordinary degree.

This period of most true united happiness did not last long. Six years of their married life had scarcely passed when

Charles Monsell was seized with a serious illness, and at a time when his wife happened to be absent. She was summoned home : it was a long and anxious journey, and she was almost wild with suspense till she reached it. When she arrived the worst was over, her husband was beginning to recover. But in speaking of this crisis she once said, "Ever afterwards I associated that day with the Psalm, 'When I was in trouble, I called upon the LORD.' The years that followed, although never free from anxiety and a continual dread, so far prepared me that when the final blow came it fell more gently."

Evident signs of the probable approaching bereavement were not far off. Before long an attack of inflammation of the lungs entirely incapacitated her husband from active work, and he was, in consequence, obliged to resign his charge. Their winters were then spent in Italy. But as he grew worse and worse, he was forced to remain there through the summer also, at last leaving Ireland, to return no more.

The following letter of Harriet Monsell's was written at the time when the long threatened sorrow was hastening to its end. It was addressed to a dear friend, who with her husband was at this time in constant intercourse with the Monsells.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I know you are both very soft-hearted where we are concerned, and I know no couple who are better able to enter into our trial than you are, for you well know what it is to be all in all to each other. My poor Charlie is gaining strength, but very slowly. He has been sitting up in the arm-chair for the last three days, but he does not yet attempt to walk the least bit. It is a great trial to see him so weak, and to know what days and

months of delicacy there are before him, which I had thought he had at length passed through, and that health and strength were come again. Now the hill seems all to be begun again. But I feel, if I suffer so much in seeing him, what must it be to him to bear these days of pain and languor, and absence of employment, and yet he never utters a word as if he would wish it otherwise or even felt it a burden. If GOD sends him the trial He most surely sends him the blessing of patience, and never has He sent us any sorrow that has not come overflowing with mercy and love. . . . You know the cheerfulness of his nature, and one of my greatest blessings is a very hopeful disposition. Now I trust, from what the doctor says, climate may again restore him, but it must be persevered in for long, and we must go abroad for the summer as well as the winter, that he may gain strength in the fine weather. This thought is a sad trial to his mother, and has been hard for me to break to her, for she thought she was sure of him all the summer through . . .

“Ever yours most affectionately,
“H. MONSELL.”

The few lines in which her husband himself speaks of the prospects of this their last journey abroad may here be added. She could have borrowed hope only from her own sanguine nature, so little there could have been to encourage it in her husband's exhausted state.

The letter was addressed to the same friend.

“How sad I feel when I think that a few days more will separate us by thousands of miles. I am setting out on the journey without heart or hope. It is all uphill work, with

no blue distance to spur one on. Strange how circumstances alter the character of a thing so pleasant in itself as foreign travel. But I suppose it is all right, it is best that so it should be in this case. If it were too pleasant, or very pleasant, the spirit might lose more than the body gained. But it is natural enough that one should be almost bowed down in sadness, when, sick in body and oppressed in mind, one is forced to go far away from many much loved friends, and from the sepulchres of one's fathers. Unless it were GOD's will, I should not wish to lay my bones in a strange land. Whatever there may be of reality in the feeling, it is soothing to look forward to being near those one loves in the morning of the resurrection. But we know too little in these matters to do more than feel, and feelings must be controlled.

"Ever, dearest friend, with many prayers for every blessing on you and yours, your most affectionate friend,

"C. H. M."

In the following chapter some details will be given of what followed after a short interval, and of the closing scene—a period which, though short, was eventful beyond measure to the subject of this memoir, being the end of one full measure of rich abounding life, and the preparation for another still more full of life of a higher order, which has told in its results far and wide as a power for good throughout the Church of England.

Chapter the Third.

HARRIET MONSELL'S SELF-CONSECRATION IN SORROW.

*"God gives us love, something to love
He lends us ; but when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone."*

TENNYSON.

AFTER a lingering sickness of upwards of five years, the end drew rapidly on. The crisis came towards the close of the year 1850. They had gone to Naples, and the last few days of Charles Monsell's life were spent there or in its neighbourhood. The account of this sad time may be given in his wife's own words.

The author of this Memoir received from her many years ago a brief Diary of that sad crisis of her history, that he might know the means by which she had been drawn to consecrate herself to God's service. This Diary, together with a letter written by her within a few days of her husband's death, conveys a vivid description of what so deeply moved her, and stamped its lasting impression on her inmost soul. It commences with the Eve of Christmas Day.

"Christmas Eve. A most lovely day ; drove through Naples with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, Charles and I, he

wonderfully well for him; all his powers coming out in converse with Mr. Gladstone; all looking bright around one again, and a spring of hope in me, that he might be again well, and rally, as he had so often done before. The last really joyous day I have known, as far as earthly joy goes.

"Christmas Day. The Gladstones and other friends dined with us; very pleasant, but Charles was tired, it was as much as he could do to get through it. They left us at nine, and he went to bed very tired.

"Thursday and Friday. Very poorly.

"Saturday. A Christmas tree at the Gladstones', the preparation for which they made him go to look at; he was so loved by all the young friends (not children) who were at Naples. He had a remarkable elasticity, yet ever bearing the shadow of the Cross and of CHRIST'S Presence about with him.

"New Year's Day. A most lovely day. We walked by the sea-side, and went in to the Gladstones, who lived near. He was faint and poorly, and that day I felt a conviction of what was at hand.

"Monday. He continued ill, and we thought we would try change of air. We went (it was the Epiphany) to Sorrento. He was better that evening for the change. Mr. Reid and Robert Ffrench came with us. At Sorrento he was obliged to remain in bed almost entirely, very ill. Each night I feared I should never get him back to Naples. We had no doctor at Sorrento, but one came from Naples, and ordered him home.

"Friday, 10th. We returned to Naples.

"Thursday, 16th. A most lovely day. We drove in the Hubbards' carriage along the Strada Nuova, a beautiful drive.

He was quite in spirits, and spoke of the possibility of getting home in spring.

"Friday and Saturday. In bed ill.

"Sunday, 19th. Very ill. Never could get out of his bed after this day.

"25th. Very ill. I let him see it was hopeless.

"26th. Communion at eight o'clock in the morning, after he had been told there was no hope,—Mr. Reid, my maid, and myself, with him. During the day he was tired and spoke but little, but at night he spoke a good deal, of home, of his father, of all that life and God's love, &c., had been to us both.

"27th. Drowsy all day; about six in the evening he called me to him and said he was dying, and asked for Holy Communion. Many friends were present in the outer room, I alone was by him. After It was over he said to me, 'Stay by me to the last,' and I never left him except for one hour, when they made me lie down.

"28th. He lingered on all through this day, speaking from time to time, and with a wondrous light coming over him now and then, every movement calm and submissive, every word spoken more expressive of penitence than aught else, except deep love, and once he said he had a blessed assurance. He called for Mr. Reid, (a valued friend of those days, who was also abroad on account of health; he afterwards settled at Ravello, a lovely spot above Amalfi, on the Bay of Salerno,) and commended me to his care, but his heart and his trust for me seemed quite stayed on his God. He had in other illnesses expressed anxiety about my having to lay him in a foreign grave alone, now all seemed gone, and only the sense of the nearness of God and His greatness filled his soul.

"29th. At a quarter to four this morning he 'fell asleep.' For an hour before he had slept on my arm, and gradually the rest became deeper, the breathing slower. Rest! oh how blessed that parting smile which told that it had come at last! My maid had dropped asleep on the sofa. The doctor slept in the other room. I was alone with God."

The following letter written by herself to a most dear sister, within four days of her husband's death, gives a somewhat fuller account of what passed. It vividly expresses the first, freshest feelings of her crushed heart, and is a most touching picture of the last hours of a truly saintly sufferer. The feelings expressed are so closely connected with her subsequent life, that although the letter is one of a most private character, it seems too important a link in her history to be omitted.

"Naples, Feb. 3, 1851.

"MY DEAREST —, This boat must not leave without my writing to my dearest sister, and yet from others you know all, and I have nothing to tell you of but loneliness and desolation. Yet, thank GOD, there is a bright light shining on all, and GOD has enabled me to feel His Presence in a degree such as I never dared to hope would be granted me, so unworthy of His great consolation. Dearest —, how can I tell you of those mysterious hours when I went down with that sainted soul to the very gates of death; holding close communion with it till he sank to sleep in my arms for about an hour before his breath passed away, so gently, that had I not been watching with the most intense anxiety, I could not have perceived it.

"And yet, dear, of this I must tell you, (for it is as a

message from the grave to all who knew and loved him, and whose heart may be failing them through fear and doubting, and one they may not disregard,) to let none delude themselves with the idea that the Church of England cannot train saints for glory, and that her Sacraments cannot support in a dying hour.¹

"On Monday morning he called Dr. Strange, and asked him to tell him truly his state. He did so, and told him that he might live only a few hours, or he might live a few days. He said, 'I feel it.' Dr. Strange says he never saw anything like the smile with which he received it.

"Almost immediately after he said to me, 'It is sad not to have Charles Harris, or Ward, or some of our clergyman friends with me.' I said, 'Should you like to have the Sacrament?' He said, 'Oh, yes,' and I at once sent for Mr. Bolland, who came and administered to him. At first, as I knelt beside him, I was greatly agitated, but he laid his hand gently on my head, and calmed me, and I have felt its influence ever since. After we had received, I said, 'This has been a great blessing.' He said, 'Oh, so great. I have prayed God that I might suffer anything in body or mind, but that I might be preserved from sin or remaining

¹ Since this Memoir was first published, a relative of the family wrote as follows to the Author,—"It will perhaps interest you to know that one time on his (Charles Monsell's) first going abroad, he was very much shaken by all he saw in the Church of Rome, the frequent services, devout worshippers, &c., but he did, as you say, remain steadfast and returned to Ireland and his work. But when he was sent abroad again the last time, he said, 'This is no doing of mine that I am sent abroad again, and I shall now think it right to go deep into the subject, and trust to be led rightly.' The result was his sending a message to me and to my dearest sister, 'Tell — and — that I die in undoubting allegiance to the Church of Andrewes and Laud.'"

in sin.' All that morning he talked of all his own and all my people, and expressed much love for all; spoke of what he wished me to do, and of what I had been to him. All that day and night he was calm, better than the night before, so much so that on Monday morning the doctor had a hope, and I too felt it. All that day he was sleepy, but woke up bright and clear, so about three, when the doctor came, they still had hope. About five he woke up again, and after a little said, 'I am going.' Again Dr. Strange came, and he said, 'I feel that I am going.' Dr. Strange said to me, 'But what is it? his pulse is as I left it last, I see no change.' I said, 'I only know that he feels it.' After a time he said, 'I wish Mr. Bolland would administer Holy Communion to me again.' He asked him to come and read the Confession and Absolution. We then received, and this Blessed Food of the Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST was the last he received. From that time for thirty-four hours he was in the act of death, and, except something to moisten his lips, never tasted food.

"Oh, dearest, nothing that I have gone through since has been anything in comparison with those long hours of suffering. His mind continued as clear as ever to the very last; no pain, but suffering intensely from a mysterious suffering of death and exhaustion. All that night Mary¹ and I watched by him, sure that a few hours would end his sufferings, but morning came, and his pulse was strong, and his heart beat. His patience was extreme, and he told me to be sure to read the Commendatory Prayer when he was in the act of death, and often asked for what he called 'his prayer,' and oh! the depth of his penitence! At first it was by far his strongest feeling. Afterwards he said, 'Surely

¹ Mary was the faithful servant of the family.

GOD will never reject one that comes to Him in deep penitence,' and constantly repeated that prayer, 'Though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins,' &c. Oh ! how intense was his suffering. When it seemed almost more than he could bear, I said to him, 'You only wished for prolonged life and health that you might in some way serve GOD, and He has answered your prayer in another way, and given you the power of glorifying Him in your death.' He said, 'I trust so,' and seemed to have gained fresh courage for the conflict. Some time in the morning he asked for the 8th of Romans, and some of the Church prayers. About ten o'clock the struggle began again, and from that time till about two his sufferings were most intense. I repeated prayers for him, which always comforted him, especially, 'By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat,' &c., and he would say, 'Good LORD, deliver me.' About one o'clock I took the Bible, and read to him verses here and there, from the 8th of Romans, the 5th of 2nd of Corinthians, and the last chapter of the Revelation. He took it all in, and found peace and comfort. At last came a great struggle for breath, and he gave one cry, 'Oh, my GOD, my GOD !' After a little while he became quiet, and said, 'Bless you, my child,' and sank off by degrees to sleep.

"I sat watching and watching the gentle breath, and thanking GOD for it, when suddenly the thought came over me that thus he would go ; and I listened, and the breath became less and less, and then there was none, and my darling was at rest, safe in the Bosom of his GOD. How often during those weary hours did I pray for his release : how often did I fear lest any sinful, impatient thought of mine had caused a prolonging of the sufferings, and oh ! how did I tremble lest in that hour of terrible trial his faith

should fail, but neither act, look, or word ever gave the least sign of impatience. At one time I said to him, 'JESUS will support and comfort you;' he said, 'None other can.' At times there came the most wondrous smile on his poor wasted face, a smile which still rested on him after he was placed in his coffin. Mary once said to me, 'Look at that!' it was so radiant. May I not say that I have gone to the very gates of death? and that none need wander from the fold where he found such comfort and such support?¹

"All that day and all the next, till called to go forth and complete what was necessary to be done, I sat meditating on his rest and blessedness, and received strength with an entire willingness to resign him to Him Who had so long permitted me to minister to and comfort one whom He had loved so tenderly, and had made so perfect through suffering. Every one who has been near him lately seems to have been impressed with there being a something heavenly about him; all who saw, have most deeply felt the influence of his death.

"Of myself I need not speak. Those who know what he has been to me for the last six years and a half, to say nothing of the brighter and more joyous years of our union, must know what it must be to sit alone and feel that he now no longer needs me; but GOD has been wonderfully gracious to me, and has given me peace, His 'peace which passeth all understanding.' The kindness and sympathy of friends is very great, and all feel that they have themselves lost something."

¹ This and a former allusion of the same kind, shows how deeply the anxiety spoken of before of some dear friends who had seceded to the Church of Rome, had entered into her and her husband's heart.

The letter thus concludes :

"I leave, I trust, on Monday next; if you can have me, and will let me come and watch over you, there is nothing my heart turns to with so much pleasure; at the same time, if God has anything for me to do elsewhere, I am quite ready to go where He calls. The narrow grave contains my earthly all. His spirit will be by my side wherever I go, and most truly I know and feel that I shall have the tender love and sympathy of all the dear ones at home, both in his family and my own to cheer and comfort me. We go to Marseilles, and then across France as rapidly as possible, so perhaps I may be with you about the end of February."

The scene of profound sorrow through which Harriet Monsell passed (her own words in describing it speak vividly of her own state of mind and character at the time) formed the most critical turning point in her life. It was indeed the crisis of her history, so much so that her after course cannot be understood without this being clearly apprehended. For it was at this time that her consecration of herself to the service of God took place, and there had been preparations for it not previously understood. She afterwards was wont to speak of her husband and herself planning (if God should restore his health sufficiently for him to return to England and undertake light duty) the establishment of some charitable institution for nursing the sick or such like, of a distinctive Church character, under some kind of Religious rule. She little conceived how such plans would eventually be carried into effect. But it was in after days a joy as well as a support to her to feel that in her subsequent life-work she was fulfilling, though in very un-

expected ways, what had long been working in her mind in union with her husband, as a common thought of mutual self-devotion. Her consecration of herself to GOD's service, as He might be pleased to call her, may best be described in her own words,—the close of the diary, part of which has already been given.

It takes up the history from the day of her husband's death.

" *Wednesday, 29th.* I was alone with GOD. When all had been done that was needful, a bed was prepared for me in the room near him, and I was made to go and lie down. When all was still, for one hour I felt as if I should go mad, then GOD sent sleep, and about nine I got up calm, as you¹ first saw me. Soon after I went into the room and knelt beside him. Who could be other than calm in the presence of that rest and peace, that smile of victory won? That day I often knelt beside him, and that evening the friend I told you of came, and would have me let her talk of herself, and all he had done for her. And then I felt GOD's call to work for Him.

" *Thursday morning, 30th.* I went into the room. He was laid in his coffin, and kneeling there, the dedication of myself to GOD was made, which was renewed here² on Ascension Day, the 29th of May, four months after, and has been so often renewed on the 30th of January.

"Robert Ffrench and Mr. Reid took precious care of me. Just when it was needed I found my widow's dress all ready through their care. They put me in the carriage, and they and my maid came with me. It was a long drive through

¹ The reference is to the author of the Memoir and his first interview with Mrs. Monsell.

² At the House of Mercy.

the town. At last we reached that peaceful spot. I knew nothing, but that I did what I was told. There were loving friends near, I saw none; I only saw him moving before me, and felt, as we stood in the chapel, the power of those words, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' Again we moved, and we stood by the grave, and he went down into it, and I felt our LORD'S Presence all the time most precious to me. I knew the sacrifice on my part was needful for the full accomplishment of his bliss, and I asked no more. One long look when all was over, and I walked quietly back to the carriage, and came to my desolate abode; but CHRIST was there, and how blessed was His Presence!

"In the evening Mr. Bolland, the clergyman, came to comfort me, but he and all felt that I was comforted of GOD as none but He can comfort."

This closes the Diary; the remainder of her account completes the history of this eventful period.

"While in Naples I went to his grave three times, ever to give myself anew to GOD, and I knelt by his bed hour by hour. I saw all who wished to see me, and did all that was needed by others.

"On Wednesday, the 4th of February, (the day week) I had Holy Communion, and many of the friends were with me who sorrowed for him, and on the 10th I left Naples for England with Mr. Hubbard, his niece, and my maid. On the 21st Mr. Hubbard left me with the Harris's in Lowndes Street, and that long, lonely journey was ended."

What Harriet Monsell had lost, struck deeply even strangers who were brought into passing intercourse with her husband. The following letter was written at the time to Dr. Hook by a visitor at Naples, who during a brief stay had chanced to become acquainted with Charles Monsell.

"Naples, March 4th, 1851.

"We have lately had a death here of one of those eminent and highly gifted Christians who seem to be lent to the world, as a light and example for a short time, but are 'taken away from the evil to come.' He has just died of consumption, at the age of 34. He was one, who like Timothy, served and loved GOD from his earliest youth, and was so perfect and consistent a Christian character, that those who knew him could not but believe that he was, though on earth, one of the purified saints of Heaven.

"To show you what he was, I must give you an extract from the diary of a clever, well-disposed, but rather eccentric young man, reckless and madcap, who had known him intimately, and over whom he had obtained some influence for good, as he did over every one who came within his sphere. 'I thought of poor Mr. Monsell: poor! why call him poor? Rich he was in grace and works; rich in cultivated and commanding intellect; rich in a simple and reflective mind; rich in imagination and reasoning powers; rich in sympathy and charity; in Christian cheerfulness and faith; rich in the appreciation of the beautiful and the good; rich in CHRIST's doctrines, principles, and practice; rich in tenderness, penitence, and love.'"

What Harriet Monsell had lost, having been, however imperfectly, described, the remainder of this Memoir will be occupied in the endeavour to show what, in her deep sorrow, through the Grace of GOD, she had found,—the answer to many prayers, and the fruit of "much tribulation" borne in "the faith which worketh by love."

Chapter the Fourth.

THE ORIGIN OF PENITENTIARY WORK AT CLEWER.

*"Each morn and eve the Golden Keys
Are lifted in the sacred hand,
To show the sinner on his knees
Where heaven's bright doors wide open stand.*

*"On the dread Altar duly laid
The Golden Keys their witness bear,
That not in vain the Church hath prayed,
That He, the Lord of souls, is there."
Lyra Apostolica.*

ONE outcome of the revival of life in the Church of England was the desire to transform our penitentiary system by substituting for paid service, which had everywhere prevailed hitherto, the principle of self-devotion, and at the same time securing a truer Church teaching. The instrument raised up in the Providence of God to impress these new ideas on the public mind, was the Rev. John Armstrong, then Vicar of Tidenham, near Chepstow; afterwards Bishop of Grahamstown, Southern Africa, where a few years of exhausting labour acting on an enfeebled frame hastened him to a premature grave.¹ He was gifted with

¹ May I refer to a Life of my friend, written by myself, and published some years ago by Mr. Parker, of Oxford?

a single-hearted, affectionate earnestness, and a rich fund of simple eloquence. By various appeals he succeeded in awakening the sympathies of many hearts, and enlisted the aid of a circle of enthusiastic friends in the cause to which he had devoted himself. The way was thus prepared for any movement that might anywhere arise, such as Mr. Armstrong had sketched out.

It generally happens in the quickening of life within the Church by the Blessed Spirit of GOD, that incidental effects arise in unexpected quarters, independent of the central movement; and so it was in the present case. While Mr. Armstrong was looking out for some person to organize and carry on a work such as he had designed in his own neighbourhood, a remarkable combination of circumstances caused Clewer to become the scene of the earliest development of this new form of Church work.

The author of this Memoir was at the time Rector of Clewer; and he had as his assistant curate the Rev. C. Wellington Johnson, who afterwards took the name of Furse, and is now the well-known Canon Furse of Westminster Abbey. Mr. Johnson, then a private tutor at Eton, kindly gave such part of his time as he was able to parish work at Clewer, and specially had charge of a district now covered by a large population, and known as Clewer S. Stephen. It was then a mere hamlet, in which, beside some few respectable cottages, there was a group of as wretched hovels as could be found anywhere in England, and inhabited by as wretched a set of abandoned women. In this district there lived at the time a poor widow woman keeping a dame's school, one whose motherly nature and devotion fitted her admirably to be the agent of any work of charity among her outcast neighbours. Through Mr.

Johnson's efforts, and this poor widow's ready helpfulness, some of those fallen women were led to desire to abandon their dreadful trade. The question was being deliberated how to arrange the sending them to the Magdalen Asylum, then the best known and nearest Refuge for such cases, when Mrs. Tennant, a lady living in the village of Clewer, being asked to help in the difficulty, offered to receive at once into her own house as many of these outcasts as desired to come.

Mrs. Tennant was a Spaniard, the daughter of a Spanish officer. They had come to England as Refugees. The daughter, a woman of great intelligence, had by dint of the study of the Bible reasoned herself out of her Roman Faith, had married, as her second husband, an English clergyman, and now, a widow, was living at Clewer with the sole companionship of an Italian maidservant, occupying a house lent to her by relations. She was well known to the Rector for her good works among the poor, but no one was prepared for the truly wonderful act of self-devotion for which she now offered herself. Her maidservant was heartily disposed, and well fitted to second her mistress. The very evening of the day, June 29, 1849, on which Mrs. Tennant was asked to help in the disposal of the, so-called, Penitents, she at once received two into her own house, and four others on the day following. They were women of the lowest and coarsest kind. The fame of what had been done quickly spread, and within a few days two other women rang at the gate and asked for admittance ; another came from a neighbouring village ; a few were sent by friends from a distance. Within four months no less than eighteen were housed under this most hospitable roof.

Mrs. Tennant, though with very uncertain health, was

possessed of unusual energy, with much originality of mind, and warm affections. She managed, almost with her own unaided efforts, to control and reduce to comparative order these objects of her loving care,—women of most undisciplined and impassioned natures,—and attached them to herself in the most marvellous manner. At first it was thought that the housing of these women was to be for a time only, till means were found of transferring them to some permanent institution. But as they became fondly attached to their benefactress, and her singular power over them became evident, and her own desire to devote herself in their behalf was very strong, and no asylum existed in England at the time, where any treatment of a similar kind could be looked for, it was resolved to endeavour to found a permanent House of Mercy, to be conducted in the same spirit in which the work had been commenced.

Two or three ladies, hearing of what was going on, offered themselves to assist, as far as other duties permitted, and came on visits, taking turns; so that after the first few weeks Mrs. Tennant was never left quite alone; yet the main burden of the work lay always on her and her maid.

Twice she had to move her strange household; once, because the house, which had been temporarily lent, was sold; when two contiguous houses in the upper part of the same parish were rented, and fitted for the purpose; and secondly, when, the estate which became the permanent settlement of the House of Mercy having been purchased, the old house then standing upon it was prepared for the reception of the Penitents. After the most devoted toil, unceasingly maintained for somewhat less than two years, Mrs. Tennant was constrained to surrender her enormous

task. In February, 1851, she committed to others what she had thus far accomplished. She removed to Windsor, where after a short time she was visited with a severe illness, which proved fatal. She died on February 21, 1860, and was buried in the churchyard at Clewer, within a very short distance of the house where her work had begun, and under the shadow of the church to which she had been accustomed for some months to take her little band of penitents, the first fruits of the House of Mercy.

That with feeble health Mrs. Tennant accomplished what has been imperfectly described, and left such substantial fruits of her labours in a state to be perpetuated by others, involved an effort of self-devotion and ardent love of souls for CHRIST'S sake, such as it would be difficult to parallel. How her work was taken up and carried on after her withdrawal, and became permanent, and how fresh forms of power for good grew out of it, will form the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter the Fifth.

ORIGIN OF THE COMMUNITY OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

*"But, ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That one who meets it unaware,
Can never rest on earth again."
"Ezekiel and other Poems," by B. M.*

AS the work described in the last chapter went on, it soon became evident that it could not grow into a permanent institution, at least not on the same principles on which it had been commenced, if it were to remain dependent upon a succession of individuals, however capable. It was felt that it could be maintained and developed only by a Religious Community. Was this to be hoped for?

A few years before the time spoken of, a small body of women desirous of living together under Religious rule, and devoting themselves to charitable works, had planted themselves at Park Village, near Regent's Park. They were mainly dependent on Dr. Pusey's care and influence. But this settlement was as yet scarcely known beyond its own borders.

Shortly afterwards Miss Sellon began her work at Plymouth,—a noble effort to meet one of the crying needs of the day,—the first Sisters' Mission work among the masses. Was it possible to form a similar body of devoted women to carry on the Penitentiary work at Clewer, which Mrs. Tennant had begun?

A Sisterhood was at the time a new idea among us, or rather one that had been lost for three centuries and had to be revived.¹ The hope was that as GOD had furnished at need the wonderful individual agency already recorded, He might be pleased also to raise up those who would be capable of forming a Community. And we can hardly fail to see the Hand of GOD in what took place.

It became known afterwards that at the very time when the difficulty of providing for the care of the penitents was being felt, two or three ladies at a distance were preparing to offer themselves, and the day when Mrs. Tennant gave up her work was not far apart from the hour when Harriet Monsell was consecrating herself beside her husband's grave to serve GOD in any work to which He might call her.

Mrs. Tennant's place had been temporarily supplied by a Miss Cozens, a most kind, elderly lady, devoted to good works, who together with a few of her own friends in the emergency undertook the charge of the penitents. At the same time, as their numbers had increased, and a priest was needed who could give his undivided attention and time

¹ The Sisterhoods of All Saints', and of Wantage, were about the same time beginning to be formed,—parts of a common movement in the Church of England, but in their commencements separate from, and unknown to, each other.

to the work, Mr. Charles Harris¹ offered himself, and for several years gave most valuable assistance, serving gratuitously.

Charles Harris' coming was the immediate cause of Harriet Monsell's steps being directed to Clewer. It will be remembered that he had married one of her sisters, and when offering himself he spoke of his sister-in-law as also willing to give herself to the same work. He and his wife came and settled at Clewer in the spring of 1851, and somewhat later on, rather more than three months after her husband's death, Harriet Monsell joined them, living with them for a while, and going to and fro to help at the House of Mercy, Miss Cozens being in charge of the House. Harriet Monsell was thus able to carry out both objects that she had at heart. She had found work to do for God's glory, and she was also able to be of use to her sister, then invalided, having met with an accident which confined her to the sofa for the rest of her life. Early in the following spring she moved into the House of Mercy, still keeping up constant intercourse with her sister, but preparing to devote herself entirely to the Religious Life. In the autumn of that same year she went to Dromoland, on a visit to her mother, other members of the family staying there together. Of

¹ Rev. the Hon. Charles Amyand Harris, brother of Lord Malmesbury. He had been Rector of Wilton, near Salisbury, had resigned the cure in consequence of failing health, and was now sufficiently restored to undertake light duty. He left Clewer to take charge of the newly formed district of Rownhams, near Southampton; afterwards he became Vicar of Bremhill, near Chippenham, and Archdeacon of Wilts, and, finally, Bishop of Gibraltar. He died, greatly lamented, at Torquay, in 1874. Mr. Harris's coming to Clewer was due to the intercession of his friend, the Rev. Edward Coleridge, of Eton College.

the common feeling entertained by them as to her intentions for the future, she speaks in the following letter to a friend.

"Dromoland, Sept. 18, 1852.

"We have had a large gathering, the four sisters together. It is seven years since we have all met, and it has been great happiness to us. I cannot oftentimes suppress the feelings of loneliness which will come, and which, when I do not think they are mixed with want of resignation, I would not wish to be without. And this time of the year has many recollections ! thirteen years ago, on the 21st of this month, was my wedding day,—we never spent it here since.

"It is a great comfort to me that all the family are happy about my fixing myself at Clewer,—they are so fully convinced that it is most for my happiness. At first there were regrets expressed, but nothing like opposition. Mamma has not, I think, taken in fully the idea of what that life means, but is satisfied to leave me to act for myself ; and when all the brothers and sisters agree not to object, I shall have them on my side."

In the February of this same year another lady came to devote herself in a similar spirit, and in August came a third, both seeking to enter the Religious Life ; and thus the nucleus of the Sisterhood was formed. Miss Cozens upon this withdrew with her friends to make way for what thus promised to become a permanent Religious Community. The change took place in the course of the summer of 1852.

We have now therefore to view Harriet Monsell under a

new aspect. She came to Clewer to be among strangers, and to undertake work of which she had no experience. The Penitents were to be cared for on a system, of which there had been as yet no precedent within the Church of England. The House of Mercy had to make its own traditions. The Sisterhood was to be begun entirely *de novo*, and of this too the principles had to be thought out, and tested by personal experience.

When Harriet Monsell took up the charge of the work there were in the House thirty penitents. Within three years from that time, the old house having been removed, the enlarged plan for the maintenance of about eighty penitents was in the course of construction. Some who happen to read these pages may possibly remember the Vigil of S. Andrew, 1855, when the long procession of surpliced clergy passed along the new cloisters to the temporary chapel in the roof of the Penitents' wing of the House of Mercy, and when the number of communicants in the crowded "upper chamber" was so great, that the Bishop and his assistant ministrants had to leave the altar to communicate them in their places. From that time a new departure, involving increased and unknown responsibilities, opened on the Mother and her small band of Sisters.

It would be misleading to expect to find in Harriet Monsell one trained according to ordinary rule, and confined to the special obligations of the Religious Life. She was of a nature which could not have borne to be cast in a strictly conventual mould. She was many-sided, embracing different spheres of life in her elastic, buoyant strength, ever entering with keenest sympathies into whatever came before her, of work to be done, or of difficulty requiring

help, or of sorrow to be comforted. And indeed she had had her training before she became a Sister. It was the training of deep, ardent affections, disciplined and matured within a very loving circle of home affection ; of high principles nurtured at home, and afterwards for many years wisely directed by a superior mind ; of practical ability developed and chastened by the facts of a very active life under various relations ; of a very simple faith, and warm-hearted impulses, exercised in the constant thought of being useful to others ; of a cheerful, sanguine temperament that made light of difficulties ; and above all of a heart and mind that had tasted of the bitterest sorrow, and in its surging depths had found the secret of an undoubting trust in God, as one able to support and comfort in loneliness and trial. She had known a crushing of earthly hopes sufficient to wean her from this world's attachments, that she might seek a truer rest, which indeed she found, in communion with the world above.

It is not meant that her spiritual life did not grow and develope after she came under the influences brought to bear upon her in the Religious Life, but only that there had been preparations of heart and a process of spiritual discipline acting on her during many years, which supplied what was wanting to fit her for the work upon which she so suddenly entered. Her character and dispositions in fact were already formed, so that she was enabled to throw herself into the new sphere of life with all her native enthusiasm, to be from henceforward her one great object. The outward circumstances of her life coincided with her natural tendencies to lead her at the same time to preserve her links with the past ; and to retain all her former interests in the affairs of the outer world, especially those of her own

friends and kindred. Without being at all worldly, she had seen and experienced so much that was holy and beautiful in natural relationships, that she could not but feel herself still in entire sympathy with these same interests as of old, and this without any disturbance or breach of union with her consecrated Religious state. During such brief visits as she was wont to make among the members of her own family, she would not suffer any loss of pleasure to be felt by any one so as to mar the old loving domestic intercourse because of her change of state ; especially among the younger ones she would still be the "Aunt Harriet" of olden times. So well did she succeed in this purpose that when a favourite nephew came to attend her funeral he was amazed at the band of Sisters that gathered around her grave, and at the account he then received for the first time of the various works which had grown up under his aunt's government ; it opened wholly new ideas to him of the real facts of the last thirty years of her life. In visits beyond her home circle,—as e.g. at Addington, (Mrs. Tait was her first cousin,) she was ever the same welcome guest, bright as of old ; alive to all the stirring questions of the day, while yet never losing an opportunity of defending or propagating the cause which lay deepest at her heart. There never was any question as to what she had devoted herself to, or where her heart was abidingly fixed, while yet the spring and buoyancy and much of the joyousness of other days still lived on, though under circumstances of a very different kind.

Harriet Monsell formally devoted herself to the life of a Sister on Ascension Day, May 29, 1851, and was Professed and became Superior on S. Andrew's Day, 1852. From the time of her dedication her history becomes one with

that of the Community. To enter into the history of the Community would be beyond the scope of this Memoir. The object of the remaining chapters will be to illustrate Harriet Monsell's character, and her various active powers, as they were developed and exercised in this higher sphere in which her whole after-life was spent, and of its closing scenes, after her work had passed into other hands.

Chapter the Sixth.

HARRIET MONSELL AS MOTHER SUPERIOR.

*"Ye loved the Lord with all your heart,
In Him ye loved the souls of men,
Your joy was freely to impart
Your best, and ask for nought again :
No selfish greed, no lust of power,
Defiled your bounties' kindly shower.*

*"Whate'er ye planned, began, achieved,
Ye kept one pure and steadfast aim,
To make the Christ yet more believed,
To win more worship to His Name ;
And every truth and rule ye taught,
Into your daily life was wrought."*

BRIGHT'S "*Hymns and other Verses.*"

IT has been shown in the last chapter how Harriet Monsell entered upon her work wholly inexperienced, both as to Sisterhood life and the care of the Penitents. She had to learn everything, and at the same time to lead others who were equally learning. It was like being cast into the sea to sink or swim, while sustaining others. There could at first be no system in her work, and this was a real loss, for there is much that traditionary experience, out of which system grows, alone can give. But all experience is developed out of living independent action, and life itself is

greater than system ; and to learn by one's own efforts has in some respects results beyond what any system can impart.

But Harriet Monsell had a great readiness to learn, not only from those under whom she was placed, but also from those who worked with and under her. She had also a courage and a venturesomeness, with great mental elasticity, which enabled her at once to be ready to make experiments, and to adapt or change what had been begun, as seemed advisable when the trial had been made. She had also the grasp of mind which could overlook the least detail, while yet her eyes and her heart were everywhere. And her powers developed as occasions arose, and demands were made upon her.

It is not meant that what she did, she did, or could have done, alone. She had from the very commencement of her work most valuable aid from the few who came either at the same time or immediately after her, and were most closely associated with her in all her undertakings. But it was of necessity hers to set in motion and direct the whole, and as the work went on, and more and more Sisters were drawn to her side, it was given to her to impart a tone and a character, peculiarly its own, to the growing Community, and to infuse a spirit which lives on, to be transmitted to a succeeding generation.

The position suited her genius, while it gave full scope for its development. It seemed providentially ordered that she should be the chief instrument in the formation of the Community, rather than take up its management when formed. For her peculiar and remarkable qualities could not have been brought into play, had she been obliged to adapt herself to existing rule, and follow out established

principles. In the early stages of the life of Religious Communities, everything must depend, to a large extent, on personal influence; and in this lay one main source of her strength. The original and originating powers, which strikingly distinguished her, had thus a sphere of exercise which could not have existed in a settled institution. She seemed to have been raised up for the particular time and the particular circumstances in which she was called to work, and yet, living on to preside over the Community when its Rule was fixed, and when it had attained, comparatively speaking, a settled form, her powers of government and her spiritual capacities, which had evidently grown with its growth, were not found unequal to the exigencies of its matured state.

In subsequent chapters she will be found speaking for herself as to her own thoughts and feelings through extracts from letters which have been permitted to be used for this purpose. In the present chapter it is desired to place her before the reader's eye in the light in which she appeared to those who worked with her, or at least to convey an idea of her character and her methods of dealing, as they became impressed on their minds.

The following words describe what most vividly impressed itself on the mind of one of the Sisters, who was well able to judge, and who had frequent intercourse with her.

"I should describe Mother Harriet's personality as the most living power I have ever come across. It seemed as if she could do nothing in a routine or mechanical manner, but that the whole force and fervour of her character came out in all she touched, leaving some marked impression, though the occasion which called it out might be comparatively a slight one. Even in a short private interview she

would bring before the young Sister by a word or tone some great defect or fault of character, that she might labour to remedy it, while her way of doing it never wounded or discouraged, but rather stimulated and strengthened; at least in the case of those who understood and trusted her. She seemed to have also an insight into the higher sides of character, and she would at the same time set before the mind the special form of excellence that each was called to reach after.

"She had in an eminent degree that special characteristic of great souls,—a width of view, and largeness of mental horizon, in which each person, and his or her circumstances, fall into their true relations, and with this a power of individualising and of taking each up separately, and, to use her own words, 'getting at once to the core of the being.'

"It seemed to be this same power and the combination of a general grasp with a quick perception of particulars, that made everything she took part in become a real, living function, not merely something customary, mechanical, and general. Whether it was a Chapter of the Community at which she presided, or a daily Conference at which she had something to say to the Sisters, or a distribution of prizes, or a social gathering, her touch seemed at once to give to what would perhaps be tedious or monotonous, the interest and variety of life."

What chiefly struck a looker-on was the exceeding vigour with which she embarked on her many plans, and the eager, sanguine enthusiasm which animated her in carrying them out. And she could impart something of the same power to others. The effect of her own determination was catching, and seemed to act as a perpetual stimulus. "It must be done," is an expression of hers often recalled by a Sister

who was set on a task from which she shrank as a too onerous charge, but which left no question on her mind as to doing her best to fulfil it. To the same effect was the experience of a Sister whose lot it was soon after her Profession to be sent to work at a distance from the Mother House.

"Wherever I might be, I could not but feel that Mother was with me in spirit, knowing all that I was doing or feeling, encouraging, strengthening, thinking of me always, so that I learnt to trust her, and rest in her love. . . . I can see now in looking back long years past one or two points which gave a slight insight into her management with regard to myself. Her 'It be to be done, dear,' playfully and kindly said, but firmly meant, when I shrank back from anything I disliked doing, always braced me up, and made me feel that she knew my powers better than I did myself, and that I could do whatever was required of me. Indeed she had a very happy persuasion and confidence that there was nothing in the way of work that her Sisters could not do well and thoroughly, and she had really a most keen and intuitive perception of the work best adapted for each Sister, and her judgment I think rarely failed on this point."

"Never say you cannot do anything you are asked to do," was her frequent counsel to young Sisters, "you don't know till you try." One remembers her saying to her; "It would be nice if you worked that stole and chalice veil. S. — — is ill who undertook it, and she cannot do it." "Yes, Mother, very nice, but I've not a notion how to do church work." "That is not of the least importance; get a frame lent you, and set it up at once, you will soon learn it, and it must get done."

Not altogether distinct from this communicative energy was the yet deeper moral force spoken of by one already quoted.

"Another strong characteristic was, I think, her simple, straightforward way of looking at things as in God's sight. To any one who would ask her advice in a perplexity she would say, 'I don't see the difficulty, the lines are straight.' That generally seemed quite sufficient; the eye once fixed upon the path of duty soon discovered the straight line, and the perplexity would vanish.

"Nor can I omit to mention, as most striking, the charm of her sweet graciousness on receiving any little help or pleasure from any one; all through her active, no less than her helpless state, it was a delight one coveted to be able to do the least thing for her."

It was universally felt that a great warmth of love animated all this energy, and gave even to a few words an amazing power. A Sister who had the charge of a distant house, says, "The most beautiful thing in her dealing with the Sisters was her motherliness. Whenever she came to see us it was more her love and brightness than what she said, that helped one on. I think she really cared for each one of us, not only as a working machine more or less useful, but as if we had been her own children."

Yet Mother Harriet could be very severe, in case of any serious fault, to some even overwhelming; but it was with a manner and in a spirit peculiarly her own. One who has had long experience in the Community says; "I suppose we should be universally agreed that Mother Harriet's re-proving would be preferred to that of all others. It partook of her own individual character. It was decided, strong, perhaps severe, showing the whole extent of her dis-

pleasure, which might be great. But then it was the whole, nothing remained to come afterwards as an addition, and once over you felt sure as to the future. A frank submission met with an instant forgiveness, and the Sister reproved departed with even more love in her heart for her Superior than before, and met her the next minute without a shadow of fear.

"Sometimes, however, Mother Harriet did not make full allowance, or was not aware of the nervous nature before her, and a collapse was the result. Mother Harriet was then the most unhappy of the two. She would at once mollify, comfort, and uplift, and never let the Sister leave her till she had restored the loving confidence between herself and her daughter.

"Her loving sympathies penetrated into the deepest recesses of the heart of her children in their sorrows. She made herself acquainted with the family trials of each; would take unwearied trouble to help each at real personal cost to herself, and often did so most efficiently. Nothing was too trivial for her to be interested in, and she would remember little personalities as to each one's surroundings in a way which was surprising, considering the multitude of matters that were at all times crowding into her heart and brain."

Another speaks of the remarkable facility which Mother Harriet had of "adapting herself to many diversities of character; imparting confidence and courage to the timid and the weak, while in the case of stronger natures she would help on the process of self-surrender to Rule without calling out opposition to be battled with; encouraging those who failed by taking up with her own hands the defective details of the work, and then putting the discomfited Sister

on fresh lines ; always patient with mistakes, and with her buoyant spirit and ready appreciation of fun, getting over a difficulty without showing any displeasure, and only afterwards, when a private opportunity occurred, making the error a matter of grave counsel. She had a gift of imparting her own special lines of thought, and would give out grand outlines and leading principles, often not understood at the time, but afterwards seen to be applicable to minor points of duty, mixing up the great and the small in a manner which often produced startling contrasts.

“ Her spirit full of lively resources diffused itself all round. Often would a hard day’s work be brightened up by a few moments at her side ; and in social intercourse with few or many, there was always felt to be ease and freedom. A close observer could detect the skilful hand she would lay on the reserved or diffident, or on one who might be feeling lonely, whom she would single out, without appearing to do so, and raise her into companionship with herself before she was aware of it. She would win confidence by giving out her own, and this with a combination of humility and simplicity, which had the effect of raising the recipient of the kindness into fellowship, instead of letting her remain in the attitude of one only receiving help.

“ She had a strong feeling that those who ruled should share interests with others, making all feel it to be a common work, even though one were widely separated from another. Powerful and self-reliant herself, she was most generous to others, making arrangements often with a view to giving scope for their special gifts and energies. Strong individualities of character were a positive pleasure to her ; they

called out her intelligence and her sympathies, for there was in her a very real love of liberty, and she would encourage a true freedom in others, believing it to be perfectly consistent with loyalty and obedience, or rather, that it raised obedience to the higher level of a reasonable service. She was fond of drawing out the thoughts of others, even on ordinary subjects outside the sphere of Community interests, so as to bring out character, and keep up a play of mind, freshening an atmosphere which might at times, especially during early struggles and arduous undertakings, be overweighted."

It was a marked feature in Mother Harriet, that she would never allow discouragement. She seemed to have suffered from the want of encouragement when growing up. One of the Sisters remembers her saying of herself, that "a turning point in her early life had been when some one spoke encouragingly to her." The Sister adds: "When I was working in the girls' school at —, there was one who caused very deep anxiety, and Mother when she came used constantly to ask about her, and say, 'Now, don't discourage her.'"

This same spirit told greatly in her dealing with the Penitents. "The secret of the influence she exercised over them was mainly due," as one who worked under her thought, "to her always encouraging them. They began to think they must try to do better, when they saw she expected it of them."

There was indeed a transparent hopefulness and assurance in her whole tone, founded on a very trustful nature and a happy reliance on God's ordering all things mercifully, and such ready, generous recognition of God in the most untoward circumstances, that it could not but affect those who

brought their difficulties to her, or expressed complaints in her presence.

One already quoted moreover observes how she would "accept suggestions from any quarter, would readily yield a point, and draw back, abstaining from pressing her desire when she felt real difficulties, and then quickly turn to make essays on other lines. She would readily acknowledge a mistake or fault even to a Novice, and, associating herself with the youngest, ever try to keep up a loving interchange of thought and feeling."

Very much of her influence depended on this strong sense of justice, and her power of balancing facts on both sides of a question. She thus imparted a general sense of security that right would be done, even though she might not explain to the aggrieved person what she meant to do. Often one was struck by the quickness with which she would lay hold of the main points at issue, fastening on them with a singular tenacity, and, separating off incidental matters perplexing to many minds, go straight to a decision. This characteristic of her mind was shown both in dealing with questions of conduct and with the forming of rules; she clung to the points of essential moment, and if assured that they were safe, she would leave minor details to be settled with comparative indifference.

With all this there was a brightness and playfulness which had a singularly happy charm, and which became a real power. In meeting difficulties, often a few strong words, or a quotation from some book she had been reading, or from a sermon she had lately heard, perhaps a flash of quiet humour, would have a wonderful effect, opening out new trains of ideas, or dissipating clouds of 'despondency'. She showed a very unusual amount of power in thus supporting

others, keeping up what she called "the sparkle" in the life, and while bearing her own weight of trial, meeting the instant need of others burdened, or saddened, or overwrought. The great natural vigour of her buoyant temperament helped her quick keen insight and her large breadth of loving sympathy. This genial play of mind was all the more appreciated because of the consciousness of the sorrow of her widowed state, so evidently living on, fresh as at the first,—evidently at least to those who were on the closer terms of intercourse with her,—and felt to be a spring both of energetic action and tenderest considerateness, intensifying and consecrating the commonest details. In all this varied intercourse, serious or playful, her object seemed to be to encourage and stimulate by showing what she considered to be the power of particular Sisters, that they might not fail to fulfil their course, and constantly strive after the perfection to which God had destined them.

It was a remarkable proof of the mental strength and spiritual earnestness which Mother Harriet maintained to the end, that although the care of the Novices was committed to a Novice Mistress, yet she never ceased to watch carefully over them, and while their Mistress gave them their regular teaching, it was her own vigorous spirit which was being continually infused into them. This wide reach of her influence upon the younger Sisters up to the very end of her working days, is perhaps one of the most striking evidences of her energy and wisdom. One of the last Novices of her day observes, how "on her first coming Mother Harriet's influence began to be felt," adding,— "She took pains to make me understand all the arrangements and economy of the House. On Christmas Day soon after I came she sent for me, and made me sit by her,

thinking I should be lonely and wanting my own people. Many little bits of spirituality she often taught me ; but not so much directly as indirectly, for her health was failing, and she seldom talked much at a time, only a few terse words on what one's life meant, and where the discipline lay, which was the only road to what we were seeking. One never went into her room without learning something. Over and above this, too, we were touched by the trouble Mother always took every time she sent for us to make plain what she intended to teach, never letting us go away without something learnt ; her way of dealing in itself acting as a lesson."

Her teaching of the young Sisters had a remarkable simplicity mingled with a deep reality and common sense. One Sister relates, as an instance, how "once when displeased by a Sister's indiscretion, an excuse was made for her ; 'She is young, Mother.' She only said thoughtfully, 'Young,' and after a short silence she turned to me, who happened to be near, and said with such force, 'Don't let them say that of you, that you are young. At your age you might be married, and have all such cares : no one would then excuse your failings because you were young.'"

The same Sister remembers another similar incident, showing how she would "simplify and smooth away perplexities when consulted about difficulties. Once she said to me, 'You, young ones, think your lives so complicated ; now your old Mother just sits here and tries to do a kindness to any one who requires it in the course of the day. It is like a married life. At first there is fussiness and anxiety about the love being felt and understood, but as years go on the love grows deeper, more satisfying, more satisfied.'"

There were in Mother Harriet mental qualities not often found combined in the same person. Those who were struck with her vigorous active powers, were hardly prepared for the taste, the delicacy, and spiritual tenderness, which came out to view by degrees; and it was also remarkable that one endowed with such an elastic temperament, should have had such a gift of sustained, persevering patience. In organising work, her forte did not so much lie in details or in defining. In this she was content to be dependent, and acknowledged her dependence on others. Her power lay in developing large principles, in giving broad outlines and a general scope, to be afterwards filled up and completed by others. Her mind was constantly planning. Often her ideas were the merest dreams, or seemed so, but when any practicable opening for work occurred, nothing could surpass the rapidity with which the scheme was formed, the possibilities anticipated, and the foundations laid. She would then look to find in the Sister to whom any charge was committed, a fertility of resource resembling her own quick imaginations, being as generous in giving them credit for what they did, as she was large in her expectations of their success. She once said to a Sister in charge of a very important work, "I will never feel anxious again about what may become of the Community and the work, when I lay it down. I see that God can raise a great work without me."

Before closing this sketch of Mother Harriet's characteristic qualities as Mother Superior, something needs to be added as to the sources out of which her inner life drew its nourishment, or what may be called her spiritual consciousness. Her standard of belief was very simple, like her nature, and it was based on her husband's teaching. She was ex-

ceedingly sensitive as to anything that jarred upon this, and as much delighted when she found any response to it. Her favourite, her one practical, ideal was expressed in a sermon of her husband's, to which she was fond of referring, on the text, "CHRIST in you, the hope of glory." The "CHRIST Life," as she termed it, possessed her to the end, and was traceable in all her lines of thought and feeling, as her standard of practical religion, and she would apply the dominant idea to all details, great or small. It is not that Mother Harriet would constitute herself a teacher or spiritual guide; she would have utterly disclaimed such an assumption; nor was her mental view always definite and clear; it was that out of the fulness of her heart she would give forth strong, earnest utterances of what formed her own support and comfort, and what she felt must be equally helpful to others.

She was wanting in exactness, but her mind grasped great truths eagerly and firmly, as living realities to her soul. Specially she worked on a profound conviction, fortified by her husband's matured belief, that the Church of England, as a true Catholic Communion, has within its resources power to develope both the contemplative and the active sides of the supernatural life; and that while free to gather what we will from the accumulated experience of ages within the Roman Communion, we have an equal claim to the same grace and laws of life, as well as an equal capacity for adapting to our national characteristics the same principles.

It is surprising how much she was able to compose, in the desire of helping others with her own ideas, or from what she had gathered from books, considering the ceaseless exertions upon her active energies and power of attention.

She was continually writing in the Sisters' Manuals of devotion short heads for thought and prayer, seeking to leaven and direct the mind of the growing Community by word as by deed.

Her life of prayer was peculiarly her own, as indeed all her gifts were. Besides her settled rule, she would set apart other times for special exercises, and was fond of fresh methods of devotion. Thus, for a time she kept Thursday evenings till after midnight, at another time she would devote an hour before the household rose. There was a small recess in the old chapel, a bay window overlooking the altar, where she might often be found, or before the altar itself. She could bear any interruption while at prayer, if need were, not letting any one feel she disliked being disturbed, and sometimes she would give her answer while on her knees, as though it were a natural position in which to be found, and this more frequently as she became more infirm. When any fresh work was being undertaken, she would keep weeks of prayer, sometimes a month, as a private preparation of her own. During the illness of a Sister she would, if the case were serious, watch by her bed-side all night, and very soothing and assuring her words were felt to be. She was not a good sleeper, and, perhaps from nursing her husband so many years, had the power of waking herself at any hour; and she was fond of making times of prayer at night while her strength permitted it.

The following extract from a letter written by her to one who had been once expected to join her in the work, though afterwards unavoidably hindered, will convey the idea of the secret source of her strength better than any general description, and may fitly form the close of this slight sketch of her character.

“I do, and will, dear, often pray for you, and there are few things I ask more earnestly than to be brought so near to GOD that my prayers for others may be heard and accepted, for it is my only strength in this work to lay before GOD the wants, and cares, and struggles of each one whom He hath given me to watch over for Him, and then to trust that He will do His own work in them, and that my want of humility may put no hindrance in their path. If, dear, I have made any advance in spiritual life, and am any way fitted to help others in it, a look back into the past to see all the merciful ways in which GOD has been leading me out of self, and disciplining me into fitness, shows me how completely, and how tenderly it has been His work, and how He has given me so many who love and pray for me; and with prayer, what may not be done?”

Further extracts from her letters will be given in the following chapters, written at different times to one or other of the Sisters, which will show more fully in her own words what has been here said generally of her mind and character, more especially illustrating her habits of thought and her dealing with those who were led to live and work for GOD under her leadership.

Chapter the Seventh.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*" I know not if 'tis well to string the heart
In solitude to take her part,
Or silence, which is peopled solitude ;
I know not if 'tis good.
But this I know, to give up all
Which here on earth men treasure call,
With firm resolve to bid depart
Home ties, with earthly promise rife,
And things that lie most near the human heart,
To spend the days of this short life
In prayers, and alms, and charities,
This in its fulness daily is to store,
For ever more and more,
Where nothing dies."*

The Baptistery.

SPEAKING generally, Mother Harriet's view of the Sister's life was a mixture of the contemplative and the active, with devotion as its root-power, but with readiness to accommodate the rule of devotion to the exigencies of the souls among whom the Sister may be set to work. This view she clothed in characteristic language, either her own or adopted, in reply to a Sister's inquiry.

"I suppose the Sisters must always be ready to leave GOD for GOD (as they say), to leave GOD in devotion to work for GOD in those for whom He shed His blood; or rather ever bearing GOD about them, to be ready to use broken prayers for themselves and for them. I don't think that Martha's work will hurt Mary's contemplation in this life, so that both are really about our LORD."

The observance of special Festivals as a help to quickening devotion was a strong point with Mother Harriet. She was herself, as already stated, received as a Sister on the Festival of the Ascension, 1851, and Professed on S. Andrew's Day, 1852, by the then Bishop of Oxford, Bishop Wilberforce. S. Andrew's Day was also the day of the Bishop's consecration, and it was his wont to come to the House of Mercy, whenever it was in his power, to keep the anniversary which was thus common to himself and to Mother Harriet. These Festivals were thus very great days to her.

The recurrence of the greater Festivals was also marked by her with special care, as opportunities of drawing closer the bonds of love which bound her to the Sisters. She thus wrote on the Festival of the Ascension to one of the Sisters Superior:

"You will like a line of love for Ascension Day. It is my own day too, and I have tried to get as much of a Retreat as I can, for it is a most blessed day. It seems to call one to so much, and to give one so much. Our LORD as He ascends takes up our nature with Him. As He sends down a blessing He communicates His nature to us; and so we learn how we are to live, and how we are to let Him live in us. And we see somewhat of what we might be if we had faith, and hope, and love, to bear the weight

of glory. Gather round you, if but for a few moments, the younger Sisters, and make them feel the power of the Ascension. GOD bless you, my child, and spare you long to the work to which He hath called you."

The following extract is a similar message of love for Christmas.

"GOD bless you, and give you a ray of the Heavenly gladness that thrilled through the angelic host as they worshipped and adored the Infant JESUS; and may the coming year be a season of union with an Incarnate GOD, so close, so intimate, so enduring, that the power of the Divine Indwelling may move your whole life into oneness with Him, and perfect you for the work for which He calls you, that you may bring many to JESUS, and be in your vocation a blessed manifestation of the life of JESUS in the soul that He has formed for His own indwelling."

Another briefer expression of love for the same Festival is characteristic in its allusion to herself.

"You and yours must have a line of love, of blessing and hope, that Christmas may stream in on you with such a bright joy as to leave no room for the shadows of earth. It has dissipated all mine, so I want you to share my brightness."

Often she would send a general letter of greeting to all the Sisters at a particular house. Thus on an Easter Festival she wrote :

"A happy, blessed Easter to you all, full of hope, of brightness, of love : if I may ask anything of you and for you this Easter, it is that as a band of Sisters you may be more closely united in love—love because of your ever increasing love for GOD,—love because of the nearer Presence of our LORD in your own souls,—love because you feel

more deeply the union of a common responsibility for the souls He gives to your care,—love because more of the meekness and gentleness, and sweetness of Divine love fills your own souls, and binds you closer to each other in Him as He binds you in closer union to Himself. Love to each of dearest Sisters, and love to all associated with you.”

All Saints’ Day was one that always drew out from her very special remembrances of love. It quickened in her mind the vision of her husband in the communion of the Blessed in the Presence of God. On an Eve of the Festival she writes :

“One line of love and blessing from myself on All Saints’ Day. Each year, I trust, draws us both closer to their blessed companionship. What a mighty host it must be ! and what a gathering even on earth round the altars of the Church to-morrow ! It is helpful to dwell on the thought : it elevates one above the trifles of earth. God bless you, dear one.”

A portion of another letter on the same Festival, which was the anniversary of the Sister’s own Dedication, touches more on practical amendment of life.

The letter is addressed to a Sister Superior who had been received on that day.

“One line of love for All Saints’ Day. Keep this day with great humility, great love, and great self-sacrifice. What a beautiful day to have joined the blessed company of faithful ones. Humility will deepen your life ; both from the sense of past failure, and the constant need of ever-deepening life in God, in your present very responsible work of love, because this double bond of Sisterhood life is a call to a very large-hearted love—a love whose home

is in the all-embracing Love of God. And also self-sacrifice, because I am sure that each year in our Sister's life teaches us more and more what great need there is for an ever growing spirit of self-sacrifice. Oh, it is a blessed vocation,—but it is as responsible as it is high. GOD bless you, dear child, and bind you closely to Himself, to live alone for His glory."

The Whitsuntide Festival was also specially dear to her. To a young Sister she wrote: "I do so want you to have a great gift of the HOLY GHOST on Whit-Sunday. I must write you a line to say, I shall be much in prayer for you and for all, that it may be so. GOD grant we may all see Him and love Him with our whole heart more and more, because we have seen in this Whitsuntide something more of His love and beauty."

And again, on the same great Festival:

"I want you not to lose the blessing of this season, and the full gift of the HOLY GHOST, the spirit of peace, of love and of labour. When He works in us, and through and by us, all must be best, and this in this world can be our only rest, for all else must be a combat against the world and the devil and self. These three enemies always find some way to enter in and disturb all rest, except that which is within the soul as it rests in God, and yields itself up to the operation of the HOLY GHOST." And then she adds: "I want to talk to you a great deal about silence,—the silence of the soul in God. My whole being is filled with this thought."

The following extract from a letter written at the close of a year speaks characteristically of the thankfulness which she ever sought to cherish.

"I must send you a loving line to close the old year

with, and to enable you to make a wee bit brighter thanksgiving for all the unnumbered blessings of the past year. We are so much more apt to count up our tiny miseries than our great and unspeakable blessings. Only think what oceans of love GOD has poured on each one of us in years past, and in this we are now parting with. Do let it brace us up to get out of ourselves, and try in our tiny way to give Him as great a love as we can in the coming year. GOD bless you, my child."

Very characteristic too is the following, written to a Sister on the anniversary of her Profession, and speaking of what a former chapter mentioned as a leading thought in the writer's mind.

"You must have a line from me on your own day. May it have all the glory of the life that springs out of CHRIST'S Death. Take in fresh courage to go forward from grace to grace, from glory to glory. Get a real, living faith in the power of the transformed life in you: we hang back too much in our own nothingness instead of having a loving confidence in the power of the HOLY GHOST to recreate us in CHRIST JESUS. This confidence is the fruit of a deeper humility, and a growing simplicity. I am full of desire for an increase of holiness, that is, of the steadfast manifestation of the CHRIST-Life in each of our dear Sisters, that the temple of our bodies may be more glorious than the building we are permitted to raise to the glory of God."

Particular, personal attachments have always been matter of anxiety in Religious Communities, because of the partialities and jealousies to which they are apt to give rise. Mother Harriet's line towards such attachments among the Sisters was to be tender towards them, and at the same time to warn as to the possible danger. It will be interest-

ing to see how she would deal with a case of attachment towards herself. The following is an extract from a letter to one among the earliest of the Sisters.

“I do not think you need trouble yourself because you love me. As a fact you do so. All efforts to think or feel otherwise will only be unreal and lead to no good. All you need strive for is to love GOD more, more singly and simply; to still the human actings and impulses of your being in Him; to love His will for you in every little as well as in every great thing, and to bound all your wishes and outgoings within the circle of His will. Love is of GOD; it is a Divine gift; do not seek to crush it; seek to keep it steadfast, and seek to help others by love, and letting their love for you draw them upwards and closer to GOD, the Fount of all love. Oh, how blessed all the inner circles of Love are! that all rise up and find their centre in GOD; and then shed down upon us rays of His own Divine Love and gladness! If we dwelt more in it we should ascend more quickly to Him even in the midst of our busiest life; and He would descend upon us with the full blessedness of His own loving Presence. Dwell in that thought, ‘God is Love,’ and thus you will find an anchor for your soul, sure and steadfast.”

She had a very deep sense of the sacredness and power of love, and that it might be dissociated from the cause and circumstances which had called it forth, and thus freed be directed to other channels to live on simply as a new force in a higher development. Thus she writes to a Sister who had been much tried in her affections.

“MY DEAREST —, I have waited for a quiet moment to write to you a cosy letter. I am very glad you are going

to have a peaceful rest, and to make it a sort of Retreat. To try and gain great inward peaceableness is I am sure of much help in a busy time like this, and this is best done, not by weakening love, but by taking the self and the excitement out of love, making it more pure and real. You will find if you apply this test to much that wounds and tries you,—say in your love for —, and zeal for —, and endeavour to take the self and the excitement out of it, and leave the true, pure love,—how deep and peaceable and sustaining it will be. I think I should make this peaceableness of spirit and of soul the keynote of your efforts in this resting-time. How peaceable an angel's work is—how strong a mark it is in our LORD's life!"

Amongst the points of character which Mother Harriet most earnestly sought to cherish in the Sisters there was no one more constantly in her mind than the grace of simplicity.

"I send you," she thus writes to one of the Sisters then invalided, "a book of S. Francis de Sales, which I think will help you in many thoughts that stir in your mind, and make you advance in knowledge as regards that difficult subject of simplicity. This being your very own you can mark it as you like, and I know you will get to love it and find it a great help and consolation in this time of being laid aside from active work. Work the soul ever must that hath life in the LORD JESUS, for He worketh in us often more perfectly in the stillness than in the activity of our outer being. That activity sometimes hinders His working just because He cannot in it make us hear His voice, saying, 'Peace, be still.'" She adds a few words about herself. "I got here quite safely, took a good rest, and then had a

good evening's work, seeing all here. I am so thankful to have seen you and —, and made her a child, as I hope she will own she is," (alluding to some one becoming a Postulant.)

In another letter she speaks of simplicity generally as a special token of the true Religious character. After alluding to the print of the Head of our LORD by Leonardo da Vinci, which she wished to have to place in her own room, (she had it hung over her mantelpiece,) she says, "It will have a calming effect. What we want is a very simple, child-like surrender of ourselves. Naturally we put ourselves into a great fuss and perplexity, simply because we will not yield in stillness. There is nothing very wonderful in our spiritual lives. Self must die down, that CHRIST may live in us; we want CHRIST to live in us, but we don't like to let self die, and so all is perplexity."

In connection with the same train of thought, she writes in another letter: "Stillness in GOD is the perfect life; the grace of tranquillity. This is what He is teaching you to *be*, and not to want to *do*. It will take a long time to learn, because one is slow to take in the stilling of the self-acting, that GOD may act in us His inner work. I am convinced this stillness, which is by no means inaction, is GOD's call to us as we advance in holiness, and was wonderfully manifested in the Blessed Virgin."

Her dealing, and the kind of advice she would give to a Sister when in sickness or invalided, is but another practical application of this same spirit. Thus she writes to one who was obliged for a time to be quite laid by:

"I am going to place you entirely and confidently in the doctor's hands. You must obey him as you would obey

me. If he says, 'Be quiet,' keep quiet. If he says, 'Say little or no prayers except ejaculatory prayers,' do it. Then, dear, you will really advance in your spiritual life. Work has been a great cause of anxiety to you. GOD does not want our work when He says, 'Lie still ;' and now He says to you, 'Lie still, rest ; I take you off work, because I will that you should learn to lie still in My love.' This is the will of JESUS to you just now, and you must bear it and obey it ; and that for as long as GOD wills it. So let me have the joy of hearing that the real, true devotion of your life is manifested in this yielding to the will of GOD. Then you will win a blessing to yourself ; and then you will be a blessing to others. The doctor will see that there is some reality in a Sister's life, when he sees that obedience is not a thing of name, but a reality."

Again, in the same spirit she writes to one who though incapacitated by physical weakness for regular work, was yet able to do something.

"I hope with your giving yourself up to take all the nourishment you can, and with your obedience, you may really pull up ; but you must take great care. I am very glad you should help the Sisters. GOD calls you to step on in your work, and gives you this to do for Him, and the only thing is to take it up perfectly, simply, and do it as GOD enables you. Nothing is great, and nothing is little in His sight. No doubt it will be a new call to you to keep the chain of restraint well bound round self-love and self-reflexion. But the two things must be done together : self must be nailed tight to the Cross : we in the Name of JESUS Crucified must go forward. He gives us of Himself wherewith to feed others, and we must feed them, or fall short of His will and purpose for us, as we lose the power

of glorifying Him, which He in His Love has put within our reach."

Then the letter touches on the condition of some one who was under probation in hope of being a Sister, but of whose fitness the Mother doubted.

"How is —— getting on? Rouse her out of every silly, high-flown ideal into practical sense, or else, tell her, she will wake up to see her unfitness for the most practical of all things, the life of a Sister. How inexpressibly practical was the life of our Blessed LORD on earth, ever ready for every one's need, ever absent from self!"

The letter closes with further advice to the invalid Sister.

"Let your Lenten work be to work in quietness, with the amount of strength GOD may give you, and take care of it with great simplicity. Every year we want to grow one year more simple, more like a child who has one thought, one only, not half-a-dozen about everything. Is it not so? GOD bless you, my child; write to me as and when you like."

Simplicity grows out of a yielded will, a will that desires nothing for itself, but what comes, as it were naturally, according to the higher will of GOD. And this further work, which it is the constant aim of Religious Rule to further, forms therefore a subject which is repeatedly urged in her letters. Thus, for instance, she writes:

"The pain it costs brings the healing to the soul. The will must be yielded, if we are to be true Religious, and it is sad to walk at a lower level than the soul might attain, just because it wants to keep that stupid self-will, which is after all but a dogged, animal thing. If the soul rises up to a life of faith, surely these things over which the will struggles, which for the most part have their root in self, must be yielded."

And again, dwelling on the same thought, she writes to another :

"I do so yearn to see you all good Religious on our Rule, I mean not looking to the right and left, and thinking this would be better, but just living by our Rule, doing all acts small or great as perfectly as one can, getting a deeper habit of a chastened, Religious mind ; more centred in GOD, more in union with our LORD ; looking less at anything that can scatter the soul."

Then alluding to an arrangement she had made in hope of furthering this spirit in the particular house, she adds :

"And now that you have the house all in order, I see no hindrance to your living a thorough Religious Life. The two workers will fall into their places, in harmony with you, and I shall take care not to place in the house any element not perfectly harmonious with the Religious Life of the House. You now are in order externally : I am most anxious about the deepening of the inner life, that the Sisters coming up may fall into the life."

Similar to this is the advice which a Sister remembers Mother Harriet giving her in a private talk.

"Let your great thought be to bring your will into conformity with the will of GOD in everything. You may have made up your mind to go to a special service, to hear a certain sermon, and it seems that is best for you, and then suddenly some one—a child it may be—causes you just to sit here or there instead : it is the will of GOD."

It is the conception of a perfect simplicity, where the will turns at a moment to each guiding of circumstance that claims obedience in GOD's natural providence.

It is touching to observe how her heart was drawn to help a Sister who she knew had fallen into some fault

through lack of this submissive spirit. Thus in a brief note to the Sister one evening after she had become acquainted with the fact, she says :

“Don’t go to bed to-night till the hard spirit has passed away. I shall be up myself, late in chapel. Let us meet before the altar of our GOD in spirit, and lay ourselves down before it in a humbler and deeper spirit of self-sacrifice than we have ever done before ; and all will be right. It is this which we want, only to think of our Master, our LORD, our Beloved. We gave ourselves to Him, but as we travel on we want a thousand things for self. He says, ‘You want only Me really, were I to give you the thousand things you would miss of finding Me.’”

In the like spirit of sympathy she writes to one in despondency, associating herself with her in her distress :

“Sometimes we feel a bit low ; we have to gird ourselves and travel on till ‘travelling days are done.’”

Her conversation with individual Sisters was full of similar earnest expression of her idea of a Sister’s life being thus self-surrendered. The following are specimens of what she would familiarly say :

“One of the things I am most anxious to impress upon you all is the necessity more and more of getting rid of the human spirit, and acting simply in GOD. What, if we were to make a resolve that in everything, every moment, all our lives, we would live and act simply in GOD and to reveal Him ! How our nature recoils from the tremendous sacrifice it involves ! ‘We could do it,’ we say, ‘in this or that, but not always, in everything.’

“Why are we not saints, but because of the weakness of our will ? We have not the courage to take up the perfect life in the special form and measure which GOD lays

before each of us. We have only to pick it up ; but we are contented to be only 'pretty good.'

"The constant living and acting in GOD must come by degrees, getting more and more into GOD. First, as it were entering the House of GOD, and then penetrating through halls and vestibules, farther and farther, and nearer GOD."

Again, talking of the power of prayer in gaining this grace :

"Mortification of the human spirit is the great point—putting quite away the fault—it may take two hours in the chapel to subdue it, but it must be done, it must not rise again. We must be 'pure' in heart. There must be holiness, 'nothing unholy,'—faith, hope, love, grasping the idea, and working it out in your mind, and so in your life. Take a book of the Bible, and get a knowledge of it, read it, and re-read it, and GOD will reveal Himself. Weak faith, therefore weak hope. 'If that I may apprehend,' if we had strong faith we should be at peace ; we are not at peace, because self is ruffled up. 'I can't do it,' self suggests difficulties—faith conquers them."

"Once," as a Sister remembers, "she said to me, 'It is not enough to say your prayers, you must live the life of prayer in its four parts—Adoration, Praise, Intercession, Thanksgiving ; and the life of simplicity in its three parts of thoughts, words, deeds,—there must be the life of prayer and the unction of prayer. Treat your life as you do a drawing, place the main features right, and leave the rest to GOD. He will fill it in.' 'Mortify self in little things, wherever it wants chastening, not outward things alone. A peach requires mellowing, do not worry or feel it, else you destroy the bloom ; deal in the same way with your life.'"

The idea evidently intended to be expressed in this metaphor was a softening, a chastening of the interior life, quietly, secretly, by an habitual self-mortification. "One's own faults must be looked after," she added, "not another's."

The following letter to a Sister on her Profession, gives, as in a general view, the standard she desired to be carried out.

"Your election is a great joy to me, and I am most anxious you should walk worthy of your high vocation. I know you in thought realise it in its highest and deepest meaning, and that the life of union with our LORD, and the nearness and intimate union of the Divine Life with our life, is all in your heart. But I am anxious that it should be brought down in its reality to every practical detail. . . . Had you made an earthly marriage you would have had the power of adapting yourself to the circumstances into which you had married. Had you moved in the highest circles of the world's life, you would have taken your place there. Had you married a clergyman, you would have adapted your life to those circumstances. And now you come to unite yourself with the King of kings and LORD of lords. I want you at once to adapt yourself to this life—to lay aside every maxim of the world for the maxims of JESUS—to lay aside the mind of the world for the mind of JESUS—to take to you the clothing of His humility—to be in all things one life with His life. And though this is professedly the aim of all, yet in special cases there is perhaps more to lay aside, and more conscious power to be brought into harmony, for power is a gift of GOD, and may not be laid aside, and power often springs from experiences, which may not be laid aside. . . . Everything of nature and beauty that is direct from GOD I think

we may learn to use without the least suffering from it, and so with knowledge, and whatever the gift of knowledge and of wisdom implies. . . . It will be my most earnest study and care to give you time for devotion as I may be able ; but beside this you need this first effort of self-sacrifice to place yourself at the threshold of your new home in your Master's and your Husband's house, faithful in all things, little and great, to His life, and the atmosphere of His house. It costs us a great deal, and will cost you a great deal, to resolve to give up one by one everything that comes before you as a hindrance to this union. . . . It is a very searching call. But it is the more needful, because you have the gift of spiritual discernment of what the union is, and many have not this gift of discernment ; many more give simply all, and GOD leads them gently on. But I apprehend for you a different task, one that I feel sure will be crowned with glory, but it must be a positive act.

"I am *there* now—

"S. Andrew's Day, GOD helping me, I will be *there*—

"I will renounce *this*—and *this*—and *this*—

"Three renunciations very positive,—in the *self*-life—the intellectual life—the life of *contact* with the outer—

"GOD be with you, my child, and make you all I feel He calls you to be, and to which He gives you the grace to correspond, and the will, and to which I know He will make you faithful.

"Ever your loving Mother,

"S. HARRIET, Sup^{or} C. S. J. B."

With all this high spirituality in her ideal of a Sister's state, there was also a vigorous common sense and a freshness of humour, which would come out often very unex-

pectedly and very stirringly, as, e.g., when she thought she saw any heedlessness in a young Sister, and greater need to watch against possible faulty tendencies. A Sister remembers the occasion when "a Novice had been heedlessly faulty, and Mother Harriet laughed and said, 'Well, I am so glad,' and then when she had done laughing, she said, 'Don't mistake me. I am not glad she is naughty, but that she knows now what old Mother knew before. Some of you young ones come away from old trials and temptations, and think yourselves already perfect, instead of the same naughty children you were, till the naughtiness comes out, and a fresh start is made more humbly.'"

The sense of the need of self-conquest from the beginning of a Sister's course, was very constantly on her mind. "You come here," a Sister remembers her saying to her when a Postulant, "to make choice of the Cross. The Religious Life, as I tell every one without disguise, is a narrow thorny path. If you had not come you might have sought heaven more easily, and enjoyed the flowers of the wayside."

Once arguing the question with a friend who had contested this view of a self-devoted life, and who had said, "Oh! but you leave out the love of GOD," she answered, "No, I grant *it* sweetens all, but it is true, nevertheless, that the Religious Life is hard and requires courage, and it is best to face this fact in making the choice."

Yet that the Religious Life is a way of perfection for those who enter it in earnest longing after GOD, she as deeply felt. There is a letter of hers to a Sister who desired to know her mind on the point of the possible attainment of perfection in this life.

“MY DEAREST —, In answer to your question, ‘Do you think one’s life in this life may change all through?’ I answer, Yes. I believe it is quite true we may, even here, become perfect with a Divine perfectness, and advance from grace to grace, and from glory to glory.

“The first step is to desire, and the second is the enlarging our faith and deepening our love, the third is the having courage to take our feet off the ground and like the eagle fly upwards, not needing to see land anywhere. All this takes long, long to apprehend, longer, far longer still to attain in any measure. We fall down again, and again, and again, ere we can take a real flight and see no land, yet alway keep the gaze steadily fixed on GOD. But this does not matter, if we have faith, and love, and courage, and keep the desire steadfast. We are not alone, we are drawn upward to GOD. He is leading us beyond the holy hill into His dwelling. Before we were struggling, and had to struggle, had to climb the hill, but now we have come to GOD’s dwelling. He must open the door and let us enter, and as He knows how entirely self must die, ere we can pass from room to room in that dwelling, as He opens one door after another, He will make us very sure we can relinquish self, one fold of self after another, as He lets the light fall upon it.

“When once there, the work is all of GOD, in the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and we attain not merely to say, ‘My life is hid with CHRIST,’ but ‘I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me.’ The actings of the Divine life in us are the actings of JESUS, the work is of the HOLY GHOST forming CHRIST in us, and our strength is to sit still, that is, to keep our humanity still for JESUS to act in.

"I cannot tell you how I have yearned for the day when these words should seem true to you, not a mere ideal land too theoretical for your nature. God is leading you on, and will lead you on; only do not be discouraged. The mortification of the human spirit this life involves; the stilling of the being in God; the cutting away of all self-imaginings; the close touches into the quick of one's own life,—are things hard to yield oneself up to; it will take long and long. I will send you next week a little set of heads of meditation on holiness I made some years ago. You can put them in your little book, and pray over them from time to time.

"Ever yours very affectionately,

"HARRIET, Sup^r C. S. J. B."

Mother Harriet was anything but an idealist, either as to herself, or as to her expectations of what others might become. The difficulties of practically approaching such a measure of perfection as her last quoted letter contemplates, are assumed quite as strongly in the following letter written to a Sister resting at the seaside.

"MY DEAREST —, I hope the grandeur of the sea and sky in your bracing solitude will help you to rise up to God in a life of prayer and detachment. There is no rest till we give God an undivided heart. We say we give it at our Profession, but it takes years to learn what our words mean. Only let us be very simple and faithful in learning year by year as God teaches us to clear away the obstructions caused by our own littlenesses.

"God bless and strengthen you.

"Your loving Mother," &c.

To a Sister just leaving for distant work, she said, "Take this for your text in all your loneliness, 'Our fellowship is with the FATHER, and with His SON JESUS CHRIST.'" (1 S. John i. 3.)

Her sense of a common work, in which all had their share, and herself needing grace equally with others, was no unfrequent topic. Thus she writes on one occasion :

"I am sure we *all*, beginning with myself, need to deepen our sense of the responsibility of our Religious Life according to our Rule. To reveal CHRIST is the right thing. We must possess CHRIST and be possessed by Him. We need to raise our lives to the standard of our Rule, and this is the result of a day's retreat I took yesterday. I am sure we must all try every hour to be true to our Profession."

The following extract gives an instance of her watchfulness over individual imperfections. The advice was given to a Sister coming up to one of the regular Retreats held in the Mother House.

"I fear you are coming to the Retreat with an unwilling mind and an unprepared soul. When Moses drew near to the thick darkness in which GOD was, he came not thus. Had he done so, he would not have been a recipient of the Divine vision, or manifested forth the Divine radiance in himself."

In writing to the same she observes how far the regular Retreat (according to the custom of the Community it lasts during four clear days,) exceeds in its effect what is in frequent use among the Sisters as a day's Retreat.

"There is no doubt that a day is good, but it does not give the same depth to 'the soul, and what we all want is depth. It is so difficult to fathom the deep places of Divine

love so as to reproduce it in ourselves, and yet we want to reflect the life of our Beloved."

There was in Mother Harriet no lack of sympathy with the natural life, as if it were out of harmony with the religious. One extract may be given to show what a rich fund of feeling was ever ready to flow out towards a Sister when any real home sorrow had fallen on her. Writing to one who was expecting every day a parent's death, she says,

"There must be a heavy sense of pressure with such sorrow hanging over you, for though it will be a joy and rest to you when the loved father is gone to his rest, yet the breaking up of all life's ties is a great wearing of one's being. The supernatural grace that keeps the soul still in GOD, in union with the Divine Will, does not prevent the sharpness of the wound of natural love; for we are formed of GOD with hearts full of capabilities of suffering, which we are unconscious of till the Divine Hand strikes and opens up the floodgates of our feelings and our sorrows. Still there is an adjustment of these two powers, the power of nature and of grace, to leaven, and temper, and sanctify it, and bring it into harmony with the Divine Will, and for this a little stillness is the greatest help. So come to me, my child, if you can. I was in town and came back to-day. I am better, and now many calls have come and gone, and I hope to be at home and a little quiet. I see nothing calling me, except the day with you."

In cases of personal trial her sympathetic interest and strong energetic support was sure to make itself felt. The following extract gives an instance of this power. After giving advice as to what was best to do with regard to others who were concerned in the matter, the letter goes on to say,

“But the side as regards your own soul, is what I am anxious about. ‘Try me and prove me,’ are words we often say with our whole heart, and then GOD does try and prove us in most strange and secret ways, and there is a trial just come to you which cuts keenly. My child, you know what it calls for ; respond with a genuine love to the call. You have, perhaps, even in your supernatural life, felt inwardly a glory in the strength of your nature, and JESUS is showing you at this time the lowliness of the All Wise, All Powerful, shown both as your Example and your Life.

“Gather yourself up to the combat with self, and be on Christmas night by the Babe in a lowliness as near this as the creature can reach, and you will find your trial has helped you to make many steps towards the ascended life.

“Ever your loving Mother,

“HARRIET, Sup^{or} C. S. J. B.”

These extracts and sayings may close with one showing how she viewed the true Sister’s life as quite independent of the office or work, or place of work ; to which may be added two others, which speak of the large-heartedness and courage with which such a life should be embraced.

On the first point she writes ;

“The Sister’s life is a Divine thing. You have to learn that in its fulness. It matters not what our position in the Sisterhood is, that is a matter of circumstances and of GOD’s Providence. But the life itself is one distinct, clear life of union with and following of the crucified Master and LORD, our Husband, our Brother, our Friend, Him Who fills up and satisfies our every craving. It may and it does take long to chasten human infirmities, and bring them all into captivity, but when the will is quite fixed, and the

soul resolves to follow, we have got some way along the road."

On the other subjects she writes ;

"I hope you have found courage for whatever GOD calls you to. Generosity towards GOD is ever largely repaid by Him. And we are so stunted in our spiritual growth, because we will not be generous towards Him, Who has been so generous to us. Yet we think to be like Him, and dream of imitation of Him without it. O that GOD the HOLY GHOST would sweep away all the cobwebs that dim our spiritual vision, or at least let us see them to be cobwebs, then we should run on with loving hearts."

And again, referring to a special day of Dedication, common to herself and the Sister ;

"To-day GOD asks of us both the same offering. It is the surrender of ourselves in a perfect offering to Him. Let us do this with a loving generous heart, and He will accomplish His own work in and through our nothingness. 'Fear not, I am thy GOD.' Let this and all the other 'fear nots' be our strength. GOD has been drawing you closer and closer to Himself. Fear not to be drawn along any path where He goes before."

Chapter the Eighth.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*"Sweet cloistered homes, to love of virtue given,
Which speak unseen realities,
And seem like fortresses of viewless skies,
Or like a stair connecting earth with heaven,
Diffusing all around a secret sense
Of chastity, and prayer, and abstinence."*

The Baptistery.

IT would be beyond the scope of this Memoir to enter into the inner life of the Community of which Mother Harriet was the Superior, or into the details of its Rule. But the spirit in which she administered the Rule, and her method of government, though intimately connected with her views of the Sisterly state generally, are yet capable of being considered distinctly from them, as well as from the Rule and Life in themselves; and they strikingly illustrate her character and exhibit features peculiarly her own.

Some further extracts, therefore, from her correspondence and other records of her method of dealing with the Sisters, are added with the view of bringing out her mind more especially in this respect.

The last chapter showed how very strongly she felt that the discipline and development of the life is the primary

object in the fulfilment of a Sister's vocation, as well as the ground of her usefulness in active service ; and this is the more noticeable, considering that her own tendencies were so intensely practical and energetic. It will be seen that this same idea pervades the following extracts, which relate more especially to Community order and discipline.

It may first be observed that there was in her mind a distinct ideal of the Community, which she represented to herself under a series of concentric circles, composed of shamrocks, the shamrock symbolizing to her Irish mind the fitting image of the individual Sisters who were to be united together in the bonds of the common life, the centre of the circle animating the whole being her ideal of the character and life of S. John the Baptist, the "mirror of penitence, humility, and purity," as she describes him, the "friend of the Bridegroom, and our patron."

She illustrated this idea in a diagram, and explained it in writing to a Sister whom she wished to impress with the principles of the Community. "The central point is S. John Baptist, with his motto, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' so that no individuality forms the central life. The circle is composed of individuals, each a revelation of the Triune Divine Life, and a manifestation of the Mind of CHRIST, forming a perfect unity, each bound together in a compact life, each dependent on the other for its perfection, each restrained within the compass of a perfect circle, that represents, as it is kept in its perfection, the perfect life in GOD.

"When we go forth to the world, or abide in the repose of the life of retreat, it is still the same perfect circle of the Divine Life that has to be revealed, and to preserve this, each separate circle within the all-embracing circle must

keep very true to the rule and regulations which bind all in one.

“This life implies a quiet dignity, an energy of activity chastened by the restraint of a life of faith and of prayer. Its power lies in its completeness, its perfection in the growing perfection of each life in GOD. It has no stiff, straight lines in it, and any efforts to put them in only mar the beauty of the structure. It is ever ready to accommodate itself to any way in which work can be done for GOD in its appointed sphere, and yet this pliancy calls at the same time for the greatest exactness and accuracy in carrying out each detail of the constitution and rule.

“It is well worth the most careful study, for it is a foundation not formed on any existing model, but, as we believe, an outcome and a manifestation of the Mind of GOD; and who can tell what may, in the counsels of GOD, be prepared for the Community to do as they fulfil their mission to ‘prepare the way of the LORD, to make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD?’

“Thus contemplating the perfect form of our Community, the sanctity of the life of S. John Baptist would shine out in it, the holiness of the Divine indwelling would be manifest, and the exhortation, ‘Be ye holy as I am holy,’ would become the standard of the life of each, a standard to be reached not by contemplating others, but by each in themselves contemplating the holiness and perfection of GOD, and by great personal fidelity to the Rule, the counsels, and the promises, drawing their own lives, and by their silent fidelity the lives of others, into the perfect circle that represents the variety and the unity of the life in GOD.”

Mother Harriet had the greatest faith in the power of the Rule of the Community to shape and maintain a Sister's

life, if faithfully observed. She viewed it as having a quasi-sacramental grace through which GOD would work in the soul, if faithful to its obligations; and though, as already shown, she greatly respected individual powers and gifts, yet she was exceedingly jealous of their being exercised independently of the unity of the common life.

It was to enforce this principle,—that individual gifts have great need to be brought into harmony with the common life, she wrote as follows to one to whom was committed the charge of an important work.

“Do not for a moment feel discouraged, you do a great work and bear a great witness for JESUS, and of His Life within you, but you must put aside individuality, and be as one of the pillars in the Community of S. John Baptist, the house GOD has given us to maintain, and in which to glorify Him. You must watch and see that your pillar is in all respects good, sound, true, and endowed with those special graces which the Rule of the Religious Life demands, and the life of your Community, if lived in faithfully, would call into exercise. You have to walk within, not beside, your Community, as the pillar ought, lest it get out of gear, and lest you fall below the full power of the Divine Life you are called to reveal.”

Writing to one whom she thought wanting in this respect, though very devoted to herself, she says,

“Personal love is a very poor bond of union with the Community in comparison to being in the wonderful circle of light, and life, and love, which each Community moving round its own centre ought to be. It is an emanation from GOD, as the plant from the seed, and around it and from it all grows. Who can say which or what gives life to the tree? No part can exist in beauty without the other. GOD

grant us ever more and more of this unitive and yet separate life and energy."

Very similar to this is the warning she once gave to a Sister whom she thought in danger from a misdirection of personal affection.

"I trust you will set yourself earnestly to grow, and grow, and grow into the wondrous life that is before us. We can only advance by slow steps, only let us advance. Avoid creature worship, dear child, while giving out the utmost love. Believe me, what one really wants is for the body to work up to the head, I mean not to exalt the head, and the body to be nowhere. Compact it all together. Don't make the head a thing apart from all. The life will not truly flow through all, if you do. The head should be the animating life of all, but yet not be placed on stilts that for a moment exalt her above the body. If too great attachment does your own life with GOD no harm, think of the harm extravagance on your part may do to the soul of another. Now I have said my say.

"Your loving

"S. HARRIET, Sup^{or}."

According to the Rule of the Community, the Sisters Superior of dependent houses have, under the Mother Superior, a considerable amount of control in the management of the House in which they preside. It was with regard to Sisters holding this position that the former words were written. She once sent the following messages to a Sister holding this same office :

"Tell her, in all shaping and planning, to put another in her place as Superior, and, as she thinks it out, let her see

what would then seem to be the right course." Again, "Tell her the great thing necessary is the subduing the human spirit. That is what mars all our lives. There must be the living in, and manifestation of, the Divine Life, or there will be the flatness which so often results."

In another letter she expressed her idea of the qualities to be specially cherished by one holding this office, while at the same time conscious of the great difficulty of attaining such a standard.

"Do not despair because you find Superiorship difficult. No one knows till they try how difficult it is. Always remember your one desire must be to combine power and gentleness, strictness and elasticity; not to let any irregularity pass, but simply to be minded when you speak, and expect to be obeyed. Don't make over-much talk about a mistake. It won't be done again. You will need the governing in yourself of the impulses of the human spirit, and a great feeling that others are under you only for GOD's glory, making them feel, (and this, from what I hear, I think you do,) that it is simply for GOD's glory, and the perfect carrying out of the Rule of the Community."

Then alluding to some difficulties that had occurred in the particular House, she adds, "You will by this means gain wonderful experience. These little moments of difficulty call out the grace within the soul. Well used they are occasions for GOD's glory." And again, alluding to some fault, she adds, "After all, dear, you have not made half the mistakes I did, so do not be discouraged, only go softly and walk more warily."

She was very earnest in her desire for a loving motherly rule. It expressed itself in the following charge to one holding this responsible office :

“Meditate well on the duty of being motherly to the Novices and Sisters under your care and training. You cannot too earnestly realise this as your peculiar office. Others are to do the work, your care and training of them is of first importance.”

She could also touch a deeper note. Speaking of the sense of the loneliness which always in some degree accompanies great responsibilities, she writes as follows :

“The truth is that in command one has to learn that most practically difficult lesson, loneliness. One may, as a Sister, have been lonely from circumstances, but this is quite another loneliness from that of one’s position, when one feels bound to make oneself lonely, and to be self-reliant on principle, not according to impulse or natural self-reliance or self-assertion. These have to be kept down, and the supernatural self-reliance and loneliness with GOD cultivated. It takes long to see the need, long to be able to practise it, and yet one feels that it is what one wants, that one may walk in a supernatural life through earth, alone with GOD, casting all on Him, and this with the brightness and readiness of intercourse with others, that makes one seem to want, and really want, a great deal from them, but not for one’s own satisfaction. To be able to sit low beside any Sister, Lay, or Choir, or Second Order, and yet to be Superior, requires grace, which one can only attain by degrees, and you will gain more by the consciousness of defect coming out to yourself, than by all the admiration you can get. You feel that true rest can only be attained in the highest aim, and to reach it requires amazing self-sacrifice, not great heroic ones, such as day dreams make, but little tiny ones, such as nature shrinks from and conscience tells us are the ones where the real pinch lies.”

Our LORD'S teaching as to the principles of Religious rule,—“The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so : but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve,”¹—had not been lost on Mother Harriet. Writing to one who had been called to a high office, she says, evidently drawing a lesson from her own consciousness, “It is a call to saintliness. You know you and I are offered as whole burnt offerings, so we must be satisfied to be wholly consumed. You will find GOD opening up inner chambers of His love, but at the threshold of each door a fresh surrender of self. You will feel very lonesome. All high offices make one feel so. GOD'S call to you is to be a pillar round which others twine, rather than a thing meant to lean itself. And oh ! dear, this is a long lesson to learn. I want you greatly to win the power of being a comfort and refreshment to others. As you gather in your interests to the practical details of the House life, and gather up the love of the Sisters, and feel what they just need to sustain the joyous elasticity of their lives, you will find much deep interest.”

It has been already mentioned that throughout her Superiorship, even to the end, Mother Harriet gave a considerable portion of her time and her thoughts to the care of the Novices, interesting herself in their difficulties, and encouraging them in their efforts. One of her strong convictions was that Novices gain much advantage from change of place, thus escaping the risk of getting into grooves. With this view she always arranged that part of the Novitiate should be passed in some of the Branch Houses of the Community,

¹ S. Luke xxii. 25, 26.

that they might be tested and disciplined under different circumstances and different Superiors.

The following extract is from a letter to a Novice who was feeling the first difficulties attending such a change :

“You will soon be entering into Lent, and I hope it will be a season of great blessing to you. This time has been one of much greater trial to you than I anticipated, but it will make your Sister’s life tenfold more real. You will know far more what it is to serve God for Himself alone. A thousand experiences you have had of your own inner life, and what it means to give oneself to God, which you would never have known had you during the two years of your Novitiate simply meandered through a life at Clewer, without your life taking any very positive shape. Now while you are in your present work I want you to give yourself in every way to learn the life, to live out of self, and thus to learn to work more perfectly. I want your Sister’s life of detachment to be quite perfect, not a half and half life in any possible way. Use every moment of your Novitiate in perfecting your life ; it is none too long for the work there is to do in it. The Novitiate has a work to be perfected in it that must not be left to run into the life of the Professed.”

Her belief was that life could be best learnt in work, but that a Sister’s true work could only grow out of growing life.

The following extract also taken from a letter to a Novice teaches the same lesson as the last. It was written in winter time.

“You are feeling a little cold out in the snow, and so are we, but it is very good and bracing. You think we have warm snow, and you have cold snow ; well, I dare say so it

is ; but GOD can make the cold snow very warm just when its coldness is most felt, and you will feel all your life long the invigorating power of this cold. Besides, you will know twice as well what you serve GOD for, and it will make your love, and all the motives of your life, so much purer."

There was in her at the same time a very touching considerateness towards those who entered the Religious Life under any special difficulty. The following was written to one offering to join the Community at an advanced period of life. It may be given in full.

"MY DEAR —, My heart and my thoughts are so much with you that I must express them to you. I feel the deepest sympathy with you in the spirit of love that desires to do hard things for GOD, and to yield yourself up to Him to be perfected for His glory. This, dear, is easily written, but it is no light thing, no light work for a short time, as yours of necessity must be. To live as you are, in nearness to GOD, in the dying daily to self and living to CHRIST, is one thing ; to rise up and obey an inward or an outward call to a life of self-sacrifice, is quite another thing. If you feel the call, and are equal to the sacrifice, and have love and faith to follow wherever GOD may lead you, then surely I ought to be and am willing to take you for a child, though after eighteen years of this life I know better what it means, and what it costs, than you can. One thing I am quite sure that you will feel with me, that we who have gone through other forms of life and come to this more entire surrender of ourselves to GOD late in life, are bound to be more detached, more ready for any self-sacrifice, more obedient, more genial and more humble, than the young,

who with all the willingness of fresh, young life, and strong, hearty impulses, and hopes, and anticipations, and bright ideas of life, give them all up to GOD to take back from Him what He wills to give of loneliness or humiliation, or breaking down of life,—self-annihilation in any form.

“We have among our very young ones some very chastened, ardent souls, some whose one only thought in uniting their young lives to our Blessed LORD, is to fit themselves for that union, and we must try and keep pace with them in our poor measure. One thing I feel sure for you is, that as your first step you ought to come away from ——,” (the Aspirant to whom the letter was addressed, had been working for some time at a Mission in which she was much interested,) “for your Novitiate. No doubt, dear, I shall daily present to you a fresh picture of self-sacrifice if you enter on this life. One is enough for the present, and also I must give you another charge perhaps equally difficult, if not more so, to your nature, that of entire confidence in GOD. You must trust that every, the minutest, detail of your life comes from the hand of GOD, and is overruled by Him.

“There is great joy and great glory in the courage that can say at your age, ‘I am able.’ It may, and it must be said with the deepest humility, but we must each say for ourselves, ‘GOD helping me, I am able.’ GOD never takes; He asks, and we give. What we are not able for, passes us by, and is the crown of another. Every suffering we have endured, I doubt not, GOD has first asked from His child, and she has consciously or unconsciously said ‘yes’ to it. It may have been years before in some earnest, gushing prayer, but the will has been beforehand in some way with the self-sacrifice accepted of GOD.

“While the Rule is preparing,” (at this time the expe-

riences gained during past years were being gathered up into a fixed Rule of life, as well as of work,) "there will be a time of prayer for us all. GOD will surely be with you and guide you, and the Infant JESUS will love to reveal to you the Divine Will.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"S. HARRIET, Sup^{or}."

The following brief note was written to the same person on the eve of her coming to the House of Mercy to commence her training.

"MY DEAR —, My heart moves me to write a little line of love before you break away from your old life to enter on your new, untried one; not that I doubt the least your being happy in this new life; on the contrary, I believe you will be very happy, but none the less it is a venture of faith, and a breaking up of old ways, and going to be a child again, and I feel sure you will feel easier from knowing that your Mother can penetrate below the surface, and knows that in all the thankfulness of attaining your heart's desire there may exist a human side where a little sympathy enters lovingly.

"Ever yours, &c.,

"S. HARRIET, Sup^{or}."

It happened that Mother Harriet was unavoidably absent when the time of Profession came for the Sister to whom these letters were addressed, so she could greet her on this occasion only by letter.

"MY DEAREST —, I would most thankfully have been at your side at your consecration, but GOD has ordered it other-

wise. I trust it will only be an aid to you to greater purity of intention, and great oneness with God. What we want is to get to live in the world, the soul and God, as if there were none other, then in all the power of Divine Love to spend ourselves in love, loving God, loving each other in God, and thus to accomplish the real work of JESUS. He purchased for us this power, and He delights to see us exercising it. My child, my joy will be full, if I can in any way help to win all one by one to have a living faith in His Love; first in accepting it with a confiding faith from God, and next in giving it back in a loving faith to God by spending it on His creatures.

“ Ever with love and blessing,

“ Yours very affectionately,

“ S. HARRIET, Sup^{or}. ”

To another on her Profession when she was again absent she wrote as follows :

“ MY DEAREST —, One little line of love and blessing. I feel sure that you have felt all the wondrous power of your consecration. Now, my child, go steadily on from grace to grace, from glory to glory. In married life people so often throw away their happiness in the first six months that they would give all they possess to bring back. And so in the Religious Life, the first six months, more or less set the seal on the whole life. The soul rises up to its exceeding weight of glory, and realising the dignity of its profession goes on as one who has entered into the House of God; and how much does that mean? If we can only live on earth with the consciousness that we are to be here the representatives of our Heavenly Bridegroom, we shall

see how we must ever endeavour to keep the whole tone of our life true to this wondrous vocation of the Divine Love. God abundantly bless you.

“ Ever your loving Mother,

“ S. H., Sup^{or}.”

There was always an anxious desire in Mother Harriet to enter into the circumstances of those who sought to enter the Community,—the family ties involved, &c.,—and to make plain what would affect both the Sister herself and her family before venturing upon it. The following extracts from a letter to the two sisters of one who had greatly desired to be admitted may be given as an instance of it. There had been a very close friendship between Mother Harriet and these sisters, which caused her language to assume a more than ordinary warmth of sympathy.

“ MY DEAR FRIENDS, —— tells me you have consented to her being made a Sister. I am very glad it is so, for I think in many ways it will add to her happiness, and give a fixedness in her life which will be good and tranquillizing for her, for the being between two things has, I have for long thought, caused her much more of struggles and inward difficulties than would have been the case had her path of duty been decided one way or another. But before I let this step be taken I must make you quite clearly understand our rules, specially on the point which comes nearest home to you.”

The letter then goes on to detail very fully the rules which regulate the intercourse between a Sister and her family, showing how those rules would affect the case in point. After which she adds :

“All this I like you to understand clearly before the step is taken. . . . You will understand, dear friends, it is not that I want to draw strict lines in your case, but I am the representative of the life of the Community, and I am bound to maintain the life. No doubt the struggle with each one is to leave all and to follow CHRIST,—that is our profession. But sometimes there may be selfishness in leaving all, and this we must strive against, and sometimes CHRIST may best be served by ministering to the wants of His children who are near and dear to us. But I must not be uneven, or allow one to enter with privileges not accorded to another. I have put the whole case as clearly as I could. No doubt to — the deepest struggle lies in her affections. She longs with one part of her being to give herself wholly to CHRIST and His work. She loves with all the warm love of her earthly heart you two dear ones. She has other struggles, such as the submission of herself to others, the longing to cling closer round one, &c., but these are easily overcome with a little self-discipline. The great question for you all to consider is, first, is it GOD’S call to her? and next, can you all obey the call? for you have to obey it as much as she; you have to strengthen her weakness, to believe in her love while absent, &c., to know and recognise her life that it is a separated one from the world’s life, and help her to lead it in simplicity and humility, not in an exaggerated, fanciful way, but as one given to GOD, heart and body, and who is dead to the world except so far as she lives in it more entirely to GOD’S service. Dear friends, I do not wish — to join us till I feel you are partakers in her offering of herself, till your hearts go along with it and you love to see her give herself thus to GOD, even all the while that your earthly nature shrinks from the sacrifice of her

love. . . . I know I put all things in their strongest light, but I think thus one avoids mistakes and acts most fairly. . . .

“Ever yours affectionately,

“S. HARRIET, Sup^{or}.”

Her reception of Aspirants into the Community was very hearty, and where the parents or family sympathised in the offering, her delight was very specially manifest. The following letters, one to the mother, the other to the daughter, in a case where this sympathy had been warmly felt, is an instance. To the mother she thus wrote :

“I entirely sympathise with the struggle it must be on both sides to part. I do not think, because — feels it, it is any sign of her not having a vocation. Fancy what it is to obey a call of GOD,—what it was to the Apostles, what to the Blessed Virgin! We know that it is GOD’s voice, and we recognise it, and we follow, but we have human hearts and human love. . . . The shrinking from the parting from home is no sign of a real shrinking, rather it is that we offer to GOD that which costs us a great deal, and I trust GOD will bless the offering both to you and her; it is a great offering, a very great one. And I who have known both lives, I mean the fulness of earthly love, and the fulness of divine love, can truly rejoice to see the young make the choice of the divine love.”

To the daughter she writes :

“It is with the most thankful joy I have read your letter. It is so very blessed to feel that GOD has been working out His own purpose by the drawing of His love, and the guidings of His HOLY SPIRIT. And now you will all feel that

you offer the sacrifice of your life to Him, each one feeling the blessing of a free-will offering of deepest, truest love to Him. Sometimes we do so wish we had something to give to GOD for all His love, and it is a great blessing when He puts His hand on a gift and says, 'This will I have.' And in how many ways does He put His hand on our best and truest gifts, and say, 'This will I have.' And when we can make the response with our whole heart we enter into His peace, and learn to know what that promise is, 'My peace I give unto thee.' But there is a long history of suffering that each soul knows for itself in GOD's askings and our respondings. Still He is ever asking, that we may have the blessing of giving with a free will."

Her mode of dealing with fresh cases was naturally different according to individual circumstances, and each mode had something characteristic in itself. The following is the record of what one of the Sisters remembers of her first visit to Clewer :

"She took me into the garden, and as we walked up and down the lawn, said, 'I hear you want to be a Sister.' I assented. 'What can you do?' was her next question. I hesitated, and she began to cross-question me as to my capabilities. I knew nothing, and could do nothing, till she came to music and languages, where I was more at home, and she settled at once that during the months I was in London I should help — at ——. I was impressed with her strong practical sense, and great devotion to her Community, and that the question in her mind was whether I should be of any use in it. It was a very businesslike visit, and I had no suspicion then of the depth of sympathy which I experienced afterwards, and which I believe was the secret of her wonderful power of attraction. On the

14th of September, 18—, I arrived at the Home, and soon after tea Mother sent for me to her room. She remarked on my coming on Holy Cross Day, saying it was a beautiful day to begin a life of sacrifice. She told me then, as on almost every occasion that she spoke to me, that I was to act generously, that in giving up myself I was to be careful that I kept nothing back. I soon felt conscious that she was taking a personal interest in me, and picking up the threads of my life in a most motherly fashion. I saw her frequently during the first few days. She talked to me a great deal,—that it depended on myself whether I should be helped or not; that if I was open and unreserved I should do well; that if I was stiff and silent I should get no good at all. And again she pressed on me not to do anything by halves. It was a great pleasure to her to see how literally I followed her advice, and she often asked me if I did not find all she had told me come true. When speaking to me of the Novitiate, I told her that my birthday was on All Saints' Day, and I should like to begin my Religious life on the same day. She liked the idea, said that such anniversaries were no mere chance, and she preached me a beautiful sermon on the text, 'Called to be Saints.' I wish I could remember it, but though the impression remains, the words have passed away. She used to talk to me very freely of herself, of her early life, and of the rise and progress of the different works of the Community which occupied so large a share of her affections. She tried to excite the same warm interest in me, often saying, 'I want you to love them.' She would often talk to me of myself, and her intentions for me. She would also talk of the Penitents and her own dealings with them, and specially with individual souls. She used to tell me that one would

only have power over them as one was filled with love of their souls, and this would be gained by praying for them ; that it would be better to take two or three in whom I might be interested, as special objects of intercession, and go on increasing the number as I felt able to do so. I had expected to be sent to —, and looked upon it as a settled thing, so was very much startled when she sent for me one morning after breakfast, and asked me if I knew anything of — work. I said, ‘Nothing.’ ‘Then you must learn,’ was the reply ; and she went on to say that another worker was wanted at —, and I must go there after Terce. One look showed me that remonstrance was useless. In less than an hour I was on my way to my post in a very forlorn mood, but the watchful care and affection of our beloved Mother followed me there, as it had done at the House. She looked after me and my work in all matters great and small.”

Another Postulant, quite young, says that what at once struck her was her “thoroughness,” “as if nothing was too small for her,” and her “simplicity.” “I remember once after dinner she had said a great deal about its being unsimple and unreligious not to take sufficient nourishment at meals. I asked her afterwards in private why she said ‘unsimple,’ and she said, ‘God having called us to a common life, and made us subject to natural laws, it seemed to her presumption to expect to be given supernatural power to rise above them. As poor married women take care of their health to enable them to avoid expense of doctors, or to do their duty, we should do the same to be good Sisters.’”

“Just before I was professed, she said to me, she felt her life was given to God out of her own keeping ; she had

no choice about the future, and she said, 'How do you feel? can you say so too?' I said childishly, 'All but one thing,—I hope not to live to be old, and a charge and trouble to others,' and asked her, 'Don't you hope to be spared that, Mother?' and she said, 'No; I know all will be for the best,—I would not hasten the time He gives me for probation one day or one hour.'

"I was greatly struck with her large-minded care of little things. She observed even how the loaf was cut at table, or tea poured out, or the least disorder in our dress; she would always keep up the standard in such things, and yet so generously.

"Certainly her loving sympathy was such as one had never met, or can hope to meet again, and the power of her words equally moved me. Once when I was alone with her, busy arranging some things in a drawer, she found some fault with me, I forget about what, and I turned a little that she might not see that I was feeling a little disheartened. I felt, Well, I must hope, because it is a duty, but will Mother or anybody else have patience or be able to trust such a faulty character? I was quite startled at hearing her voice with its peculiar tone, say, 'Yes, Mother is not quite such an impatient Irishwoman as you think. If God gives three-score years and ten for you to grow to perfection in, Mother won't expect it at your age. I suppose you did not know your back was transparent, but my love lets me see into your heart, you see.'

"Once I was sent off unexpectedly to some very pressing work just before Passion Week. When I said good-bye, I tried to hide that it was distasteful to me to go, but I said to her, 'Say a good word for me, to take with me,' and she said directly, 'Look, where you go, all the path is red, red,

and every one you meet is red with His Blood. Then look and see the price He paid for them, and love and work for them in that spirit of self-sacrifice.'

"She had a very keen feeling about confidence; more than once she said, it was owing to her. She did not see the good of a Superior, unless she was made use of, and once she said, 'There could be nothing wrong in telling me, if a Sister felt that the circumstances she was placed in were too trying, and then leaving the matter to her Superior to decide. Think what it is to save from suffering or a fault. It comes to me bitterly, when too late, that such might have been saved by such a trust and openness.' Mother was very vexed one day at finding a young Sister had suffered from nervous fear while sleeping at —. She said, 'I asked her if she minded, and she should have told the truth.' I said, 'I thought she wished to conquer herself,' and Mother said, 'That was for me, not her, to decide. No, I am angry with her.'

"When I told her once how I had been disappointed at finding a Sister different from what I had thought at first, she turned with such a look of sympathy, and then with her quick variation of manner said, 'No, I will tell you, I thought some Saints at first, then that they were very naughty people, and now I am more reasonable. I know they are good women, and full of good and earnest intentions, and striving to live up to them. Remember God, not we, chooses His own instruments. If we are good enough for Him to work with, I suppose we are good enough for each other. It is all naughtiness to be judging, and looking at such things to disturb oneself.'"

Mother Harriet was as quick in seeing when Sisters were failing in health or strength, as she was earnest in urging

upon the able-bodied the need and the value of earnest work. Thus to one in a distant charge she writes :

"I hear you are looking very weak and pale, so I have put you in ——'s hands to give you a time-table, and beg I may see it. And you are not to be up early, and not to go to ——. You are doing too much, and you will only quite knock up. And you are not eating enough, or the right things, nor taking the right care of yourself, I am sure."

Thus again, to one to whom she had confided the care of two invalid Sisters :

"Make them eat a great deal and drink a great deal ; your vocation for them both is to play, for both want thorough recruiting."

Again :

"So glad you have got Sister —— ; cheer her up in every way. I send you a cheque for £2, to take drives. Do cheer her up in every way, and don't send her home till she is quite cheery, and able to keep a cheery life around her."

If she thought there had been real imprudence and unreasonable risk of health, she would come down on the offender with all her energy, though often not without a mixture of fun.

"MY DEAREST ——, I am so vexed with you, I don't know what to say. To think of your having the folly of going to ——, when all you are wanted to do is to keep your strength together, just to keep the headship of the Home. You will just break down, and not be able to do that. You must dress warm to go through the cloister, and in over-cold not go at all. You have all the folly of a

young thing in you, and the pride too. I know it's all that lay at the root of that escapade.—So there's a scolding now."

But she could temper this tone of reproof with tenderness. A Sister remembers being dreadfully cast down by an unusual severity because she (the Mother) thought that she (the Sister), when ordered by the doctor to give up all active work for the time, had broken down through doing what should have been done by others. But after a few hours she was sent for to her room, and greeted with, "I thought my child would want her old Mother this evening." And then she went on to show the Sister very lovingly, that there had been blame, but that her displeasure was past, and that the Sister must cheerfully give up work and do as she had been told.

This same mixture of strictness with motherly tenderness was very characteristic. It greatly struck a Novice one day when sent to a distant house to fetch a sick Sister. The Mother said to her, "Be very careful of her, and wrap her up carefully. I scolded her well, because she was not keeping her Rule, nor taking care, but, poor little thing, she must be helped now."

A similar incident is recorded of herself by another, who had got into great trouble, and had received one of the Mother's severest rebukes.

"It was at a distant House of the Community, and there was a drive to be taken to the station, on the Mother's return home. It would have been natural that a Sister in higher authority should have accompanied the Mother, and it was a privilege very greatly desired. A senior Sister asked if she should go. It was the morning after the reproof

was given. But the Mother said, 'No, let —— go, because she is in trouble;' and the trial was over, and never mentioned again."

In the following chapter some details will be given of the progress made by the Community while under Mother Harriet's government, and of the works which during that time were established beyond the House of Mercy.

Among other works was a very important settlement in New York. It is the Rule of the Community that a Sister cannot be sent out of England without her own consent, but several Sisters volunteered to go forth.

To one of these Mother Harriet thus wrote :

"MY DEAREST ——, I am deeply interested in this step of yours. The pilgrim has not long had to sit musing what God would have done in the life of entire self-surrender. He has so wonderfully opened the way, you have but to 'be of good courage,' and go forward. Abraham is an example in the life of faith from the first. 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land which I will show thee.' Every step is marked with an increasing call to sacrifice. It will help you to lay deep your foundation in this thought. 'The land that I will show thee,' is Jerusalem, the vision of peace, the life of God impressed on the soul. But you have opened your soul to take in the Life of God, and now He will lead you on, as and how He wills. My heart and prayers are with you.

"Ever your very loving Mother,
" &c., &c."

The opening of fresh works is always accompanied with difficulties, and would call forth from her very special encou-

agement. It was to a Sister engaged in laying the foundations of one of the Community's chief works that the following words were written.

"Such a great work as GOD is permitting you all to do cannot but have its second side of trial and testing, so be of good courage, and while keeping the soul pure, do not be too sensitive as to fault in yourself or others. Look too at trial more as a blessing, an uplifting power, than as a mere discipline, so will the soul pass on more into the life in GOD. I know you have learned to lay hold of that life in GOD; seek to penetrate deeper into it this Lent, and contemplate the repose of the life, perfecting and perfected in GOD, and that suffering must form a part of our pilgrimage."

And again to another under similar difficulties :

"No doubt your present work and position open up new phases of the life to you, as they bring you more into contact with the real life of others. In ordinary Community life one does not see unfolded the deeper struggle of the whole being of Sisters, as they come up against one another, and if you come close to the Superior you must share her anxieties; they will affect you also. Rest on these two texts, 'The excellency of the treasure is in earthen vessels,' and, 'Hold thee still in the LORD, and abide patiently in Him,'—stillness in ourselves and being patient with others; not expecting too much, knowing how slowly we had advanced ourselves; how difficult real growth is. This does not mean tolerating evils that should not exist from their very nature. The Rule must be kept; deference must be shown; all the external discipline, as it were of the army, *that* is of necessity. The Divine Wisdom comes in while dealing with that which is beneath, here is our field of prayer, of holiness, of

tenderness, of love ; here where we are ourselves perfected, while trying to help others ; for it is the CHRIST-life in us that does this work ; really CHRIST speaking, thinking, acting in our humanity through the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST, and the transforming power of the Sacramental life."

Again in a similar strain, associating herself with the Sister in a common infirmity :

" My message to you all is to be very faithful in revealing the Mind of CHRIST, and keeping in captivity the human spirit. I know how difficult it is always to see how to adjust the aim and aspirations of one's life to the practical details of daily difficulties, still I am sure the enemy to watch against is the human spirit. I long pondered this matter for myself, and came to this conclusion. Thus you will be filled with a Divine power and energy that must accomplish the will of GOD. It is not always easy to discern the will of GOD, but if the fountain of our life is kept pure, the water of life must flow from it, and our day's work contribute to the great stream of life that flows out from the city of GOD for the healing of the nations, and in this stream all our own little trials get turned into gold."

The author may, he trusts, be excused if he introduces here a letter having reference to himself, showing how, in his relation to the Community he shared the same affectionate sympathy which has been shown to have been so abundantly given to the Sisters. The letter was sent round to the Sisters at the different Houses on the occasion of an illness which at first threatened to be fatal, and was felt by her to be a time of spiritual watchfulness for themselves :

"DEAR SISTER,—I hope you and the Sisters will in this time, while we keep the novena of prayer for our dear Warden, seek to review our own lives as regards the Rule he has given us, and all his teaching, so that humbling ourselves before GOD we may be heard in his behalf.

"During this novena, what I think we all need to do is to look to our lives of intercourse with one another, and with the world, where it touches us, rather than our lives with GOD. There, I trust, we are all true, in our desire to live for GOD alone, and hold our will in suspense before His will.

"But in the charity, and love, and gentleness of life, and all the human side, we want to adorn it with the beauty of holiness, and the spirit of loving self-sacrifice, being out of self in GOD, and so revealing, as an unction round us, the CHRIST-life in GOD. No time could be more blessed than this for such a renewal of life, while we stand, as it were, waiting on the will of GOD.

"Ever your loving Mother,

"S. HARRIET, Sup^{or}."

It is not difficult to see how the community of feeling indicated by these letters and extracts, was calculated to give strength, and brightness, and buoyancy, to all the elements of influence which Mother Harriet was, through GOD's grace and goodness, enabled to bring to bear on the Sisters working with and under her.

It will not here be out of place to allude to the occasional times of refreshment which Mother Harriet allowed herself to take, to recruit her strength. Her delight was to make short journeys abroad, and this sometimes under special

medical advice. Her sketching power added greatly to the refreshment. It was her wont to take one or two Sisters with her as her companions. Nor were these intervals of exceeding pleasure lost to them. One who had thus been selected to accompany her, says :

“ I think the reality of the life dawned upon me when I was abroad with her the first time. I saw then beneath the surface the great depths of abiding suffering, while all went on undisturbed in the daily life. I have never been able to put it into words even to myself, but the understanding came to me.”

It is no uncommon remark that a person's real character comes out to view more visibly in times of recreation and leisure than under the press of business. The following account of one of these brief journeys, the particulars of which a Sister recollects, may be given as a sample of the kind of life thus led :

“ In 1869 she was advised again to try the baths of Gastein, from which she had before derived much benefit. She asked me if I would like to go with her, and I was only too delighted. She left me to make all the minor arrangements, as I had been there before, and she wanted to rest, and have no trouble in travelling. The Superior of S. Margaret's Sisterhood was then very much out of health, and it was proposed that she should accompany us. We were to go through the Engadine to the Tyrol. We started after Commemoration Day for Antwerp. I did not know it was necessary to secure berths beforehand, and when we got to the steamer all were engaged. When night came on, Mother and I lay down on the straw under an awning provided for the horses on board, and in spite of the stamping and snorting of our companions, I think we slept more comfort-

ably than we should have done in the crowded cabin below. At Antwerp we visited some old friends among the pictures, and drove to a large establishment for Church needlework, where she made some purchases, specially of peculiar shades of silk, that she considered effective. The leading thought in our travels was to pick up some new idea that might be copied or adopted with benefit to Clewer, or some of the Houses, or at least to some member of the Community; its interests were never out of her mind. We slept that night at Brussels, and next day went on to Cologne, where we were to meet the East Grinstead Superior. We were standing on the steps of the Cathedral, wondering where to look for her, when we recognised her coming across the Square with S^r ——. We went down to meet them, and after a few words S^r — left her Mother in our charge, and hurried off to catch the train that was to take her back to England. We then turned into the Cathedral, and spent some time there, specially inspecting some wonderful needlework in the choir, that we had heard of. They at first did not care to show it us, but our importunity prevailed, and we were rewarded for our pains. They were large figures ‘appliqué,’ and very effective. That afternoon we went on to Kreusnach, Mother having promised to write to the Bishop and tell him of his son and daughter-in-law, about whose health he was anxious.

“We spent Sunday there, and heard Mr. Wilberforce preach. In the evening we walked to the river after service, and he and his wife sat with Mother on the trunk of a tree talking over old times. The next morning Mr. Wilberforce came to see us off, bringing Mother a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Our appearance at the hotels and stations excited a great deal of curiosity and speculation,

and she used to laugh at overhearing it settled that we were on our way to or from the seat of war to attend on the wounded. . . . I remember our enjoyment in driving through the Black Forest, stopping the carriage at times, while Mother made a sketch, and we gathered wild flowers, and the little wayside inn, where we dined, and the wonderful clock, with the hunter playing the hours on his horn, which I began to covet for —, upon which she told me I must learn detachment, and not to want everything for the —, as if I was to end my days there. But directly afterwards she began to inquire the price of such clocks, and where they could be bought, and talked of the pleasure such a clock would excite in the children's ward at the hospital.

“It must have been at Constance or Chur that we left the railway, and engaged a carriage to Innsbruck that was to take us across the Engadine. Mother's keen interest and delight in every little roadside incident made her a most charming travelling companion, and she was never in the least put out or worried by the *contretemps* that will rise up, however carefully we may try to avoid them. Wherever we stopped on Sunday she always inquired if there was any English service there, and if there was, no matter in what hole or corner it might be conducted, she always attended herself, and desired me to accompany her. One night we slept at the little inn at the top of the Finstermünz Pass. She thought me unduly excited at finding myself so unexpectedly among my beloved mountains, and held forth to me for some time on the necessity of taming ‘the wild animal,’ which, she said, was still so strong in me. I used to sleep in the same room with her at these roadside inns. She used to get up in the night, and stand watching the stars, and she

would come and alter my pillow if it did not look comfortable. If she found me awake she would begin to talk, pouring out beautiful thoughts, and giving me good advice, which I was much too sleepy to appreciate, so that I remember feigning to sleep on one of these nocturnal visits. She gave me a great scolding the next morning, when, after remarking on my sound sleep, I was obliged to confess that I had been awake all the time. She said I ought to be ashamed of trying to deceive my old Mother. How often I have wished since that, instead of pretending to be asleep, I had got pencil and paper, and written down all the wise words that were ready to flow from her lips. Sometimes she made some lovely sketches; I cannot remember the names of the places, though the features of the landscapes remain vividly in my memory. She drew very rapidly, and got the effect she wanted very quickly. These sketches were finished when we settled down at Gastein. As we were living in the carriage for some days, she tried to bring a little amount of order into it. At a certain hour we began to talk, having read to ourselves for a time, made our meditations, and said our Offices silently, and at a regular hour she gave us what she called our refection, part of a roll with some dried fruit. As I sat opposite to her in the carriage she was able to comment on my dress, which was badly made. She wanted me to alter it, but I did not know how. She said I ought to be ashamed of myself, but seemed to think I was too old to mend my ways, therefore she would alter it herself. When we came to Gastein she took my cloak and cut and snipped it, in a peculiar fashion, though the result was not so successful as she expected.

“At Insbruck we dismissed our carriage and hired another that took us through the Zeller-Thal to Gastein. There we

were fortunate in securing good rooms, on moderate terms, on the lower floor of a beautiful house belonging to one of the nobles of the land, commanding a splendid view of the gorge and river below with its waterfalls. There we stayed for a month, while the two Superiors went through the regular course of baths. Our meals were sent us from the hotel. The days passed very quietly, and we got through a great deal of reading and writing. Mother wrote a great many prayers and precepts in my Manual, which she copied from her own manuscript book. She filled up all the blank pages, and sewed in some more.

"At last the doctor gave us leave to go, and hiring another carriage we made our way to Salzburg. There we visited a large hospital nursed by Nuns. We had been given a letter to the Superior, and they very kindly showed us everything; Mother, as usual, always looking out for some improvement that might be copied at Clewer. We left Salzburg by the night train for Strasburg. I was very anxious to break the journey at Munich, but she was determined to be at Clewer for S. Michael and All Angels, and there was no time left to loiter on the road. It was too long a journey for her, and undid much of the good she had gained at Gastein. She said herself, 'I am getting too old for these expeditions.' But as soon as we had breakfasted, and she was a little rested, she was all eagerness to visit the Cathedral, and we hurried off to be in time to see the clock strike and the wonderful procession of Apostles.

"Next day we went on to Paris, and stopped at the Hotel Castiglione. My great desire was to visit the hospital, 'Hotel Dieu,' so we drove there first, but we were too late; it was past the visiting hours. The Sisters were gone to Vespers, and nothing we could say would induce the old concierge to

let us inside the door. Mother was very disappointed, even more so than I was; but there was no help for it, so we drove next to some large shops for supplying Religious Houses, to examine their materials, and see if she could find anything better and cheaper for our habits. We came home by Dieppe, and as we approached Newhaven we recognised on the pier Sisters from East Grinstead waiting to claim their Mother. We gave her up to them, but we were very sorry to part from her. The train was waiting, and after a cup of tea the Stopford Sackvilles made room for us in their carriage, and getting safe to London we found our way at that late hour to Blomfield Place. Sister —— made us very comfortable, and the next day we went down to Clewer, arriving on the eve of S. Michael and All Angels, as Mother had wished to do just twelve weeks beforehand."

Her feeling towards English Church services abroad has been incidentally spoken of in the above account. A Sister who accompanied her on another similar journey relates an incident in which the same feeling was expressed :

"When I went abroad with her and Sister ——, we two went one Saturday, when passing through Brussels, to see if there would be early Communion. There was then only a 'temple,' shared with French Protestants, and I said to Mother, I did not feel inclined to make my Communion there. She said so sweetly, 'You should consider that our LORD is content to put up with such bare surroundings. If He is willing to meet you there, might you not put up with the shock to your taste and feelings?'"

To this same Sister she once spoke of one of her rules for devotion during her journeys.

“That time I was abroad with her she told me it was her habit to take some subject for a kind of long retreat, which she kept inwardly, not withdrawing from ordinary calls, but keeping the one idea working in her thoughts till she felt she had done with it. She said, ‘I suck my orange while there is any juice left.’ I said, ‘Was it not a strain?’ She said, ‘No;’ but she would not advise me to do it, I had better grow more practical first.”

In early days, during her married life, Mother Harriet and her husband, when travelling on the Continent, were interested in visiting convents, to learn what they could of the practical methods pursued, having at heart the establishing in England some form of religious work. With the same view, though under very different circumstances, she now again paid some visits to Religious Houses, and entered into conversation with the Nuns, seeking to gather any hints as to the details of their work.

Mother Harriet never had any inclination Romewards, but she was characteristically free and dispassionate in matters of doctrine, and would welcome aid from any quarter, ever desirous of learning whatever might improve her work. As to differences within our own Communion she was singularly large of heart, and her sympathies and generous allowance extended to various schools of thought.

The following letter will give a true idea of the spirit in which she would regard such differences. It refers to the relative of a Sister, one whose consistency and zeal for good works she admired, though they were much opposed in their religious convictions. “It will be a great pleasure to me if your ——’s work succeeds. I do not hold to the idea held by some as to what they call the fearful divisions in the Church of England; it is only that one steps this much

as they climb the mountain, the other that much. I have climbed through both their seeings, and know by heart what each sees and thinks to be perfect truth. When we get to the top we shall all discover how little we have seen of the fulness of the truth, and this little 'through a glass darkly.' But as we have struggled to see lovingly and faithfully, we shall then learn how our God has been working through our mistakes, and has accepted all done for Him as if it had been done perfectly."

The results of Mother Harriet's labours remain yet to be shown, and with the view of exhibiting something of these results, the following chapter will give a few details of the works into which the Community was led to embark during the twenty-five years of her rule, and which owe so much to her zeal, her love, and her wisdom.

Chapter the Ninth.

THE PROGRESS OF THE SISTERHOOD UNDER MOTHER HARRIET.

*" Gather the Harvest in :
Ye know ye live not to yourselves, nor die,
Then let not this bright hour of work go by ;
To all who know, and do not, there is sin :
Gather the Harvest in.*

*" Gather the Harvest in :
Soon shall the mighty Master summon home
For feast His reapers. Think ye they shall come
Whose sickles gleam not, and whose sheaves are thin ?
Gather the Harvest in."*

STONE'S "*Knight of Intercession*," &c.

IT was out of the needs of the Penitentiary work, as shown in a previous chapter, that the Sisterhood of S. John Baptist arose. But as soon as the Sisterhood was formed, it was resolved that it should not be confined to the care of Penitents. It was thought that a variety of objects would prevent the strain that might be felt from the exclusive devotion to Penitentiary work ; that the fitness for carrying out such work was a special gift, the property of the few, and that different minds, differently constituted, would necessarily require different spheres of labour, and

perhaps the same persons require relief by change of employment.

Mother Harriet's mind and experience very specially disposed her to cherish this wider view of Sisterly work, and prepared her for throwing herself energetically into whatever offered itself, so far as circumstances, and the available number of Sisters permitted.

It would be out of place here to enter into the history of the several Foundations which grew up under her control. It is proposed only to give some idea of the extent of work entered upon during this period, the accomplishment of which was due in large measure to her energy, while at the same time the account will serve to illustrate her characteristic method and principles of working.

The expansion of the work was quite unexpected both by herself and by those who had been engaged in furthering the original design, before she came to take her part in it. One day speaking to a friend who visited her at the House of Mercy in its then enlarged condition, and who had remarked on the extent of the Sisters' work, she said: "Yes, when I first was asked to take charge of the little old house and the twenty Penitents, I cried,—the responsibility seemed so great, and it has been growing ever since. But it has been a development quite unlooked for by me." And then she told, "how at her husband's deathbed she had wholly dedicated her life to God's service, without any conception of how it would be in the future, but that out of hearts and lives so given to God He takes the material, as it were stone or clay, and works it all and fashions it as an architect might build up some fabric."

The first opening for work beyond the House of Mercy presented itself as early as 1855. It arose from the close

connexion that existed between the rising Community at Clewer, and a lady then distinguished for good works, and whose memory now lives enshrined in the grateful love and reverence of another Religious Community, which under GOD owes its existence to her and her husband,—Rosa Lancaster.

This lady had under her care in London an Orphanage and Industrial School, which she desired to remove to the country. Mother Harriet undertook the charge of these orphans. It was the more acceptable to her because her husband and herself had contemplated establishing such an institution, had his life been spared. It was felt to be as a special Providence that this offer should have come to her as her first undertaking.

S. John's Home at Clewer was the outgrowth of this venture. With this was associated a Ward for Convalescents, which being afterwards separated from S. John's Home, and removed to two small cottages in the village, grew finally into the present S. Andrew's Convalescent Hospital. Thus the two first designs beyond the Penitentiary work were set in motion. The building of S. Andrew's Hospital, of which the first stone was laid in 1865, was a striking instance of the power which was being brought to bear on the Sisters' work.

It has been the custom of the Community, a custom of which Mother Harriet felt the value, to associate with its works a lay body, sometimes simply lay, sometimes composed of clergymen and laymen,—if it were a large work, a regular council; if small, two or more friends—to act as coadjutors and helpers in the building and maintenance of the institution.

S. Andrew's Hospital was the most extensive and costly

work which the Community had undertaken. Mother Harriet trusted that the Council, or one of its members, would sign the contract, when no less a sum than £7,000, beyond what had been already collected, was needed to meet the estimate. No one of the Council would venture to do this, or could think it prudent ; nor can any one wonder at this reluctance. But Mother Harriet was greatly roused, and, finding no other means available, herself signed the contract, and then set herself with the most indefatigable industry to get together securities in case of her death, at the same time urging forward all possible efforts to collect the sum required. It cost her a tremendous effort, but the result was successful, and the existence of S. Andrew's Hospital is due, under God, to the unsparing and untiring energy which she then put forth.

Both these Foundations, S. John's Home, and S. Andrew's Convalescent Hospital, are within the same parish in which the House of Mercy is situated, indeed within the grounds attached to the House of Mercy.

A third Foundation within the same parish, yet somewhat farther from the House of Mercy, grew up under her fostering care. Commencing with a little day school in a poor cottage contiguous to the wretched hovels from which the first Penitents of the House of Mercy were drawn, it has gradually developed into S. Stephen's Mission House (built in 1867), the High School and College, with the stately Church, and the Day Schools for the poor, forming the ecclesiastical centre of a new and large district, now separated from the Parish of Clewer, and containing about 2,000 of a purely labouring class.

These were comparatively home works.

In 1860 the Community planted its first Mission in Lon-

don, at S. Barnabas', Pimlico, then under the charge of the Rev. G. Cosby White. It was the second¹ entrance into London of a Sisterhood having its head quarters out of London, an experiment as to the possibility of the harmonious working of Sisters, not indigenous, with the Parish Priest. There can be no question as to the difficulty of such a co-operation, involving, as it does, the mutual action of two distinct authorities. That it was successful was largely due to Mother Harriet's wisdom and breadth of sympathy, and her ability to look at questions as they arose from both points of view. The S. Barnabas' Mission rapidly grew; a girls' school, an orphanage, and a small almshouse, clustered round it, and the Refuge close by formed by the Rev. the Hon. Robert Liddell (the first Refuge that arose in London as the fruit of the new Penitentiary movement), came also under the Sisters' care.

Other Missions soon followed in other parts of London; —the Rose Street Mission House with Mission work in S. Mary's, Soho, in 1862; the S. Alban's Mission in 1868, and later on, towards the close of Mother Harriet's Superiorship, the Mission of All Hallows, close by Blackfriars Road, in the Borough. The Rose Street Mission House became also a Home for children, a Home of a preventive kind. The well known House of Charity in Greek Street, Soho, was undertaken to be worked by the Sisters in 1861; and somewhat later the Church workrooms were established at 36, Soho Square,—the whole together forming a cluster of works at an important centre.

A Sister, who had much opportunity of observing Mother Harriet's mode of proceeding in laying these Foundations

¹ The East Grinstead Sisters had planted a Mission at S. Mary's, Crown Street, in 1858, two years before.

of the Community's work in London, says, "I do not think that any of our dear Mother's 'Foundations' have ever failed, and for this reason, that she prepared so carefully beforehand, and afterwards infused into them so much of her own energy. One of her first anxieties was lest she should interfere with what she called the 'lines' of another Community. She looked carefully all round, and if she thought that either from the nature of the work itself, or from the close proximity of another Sisterhood, the work she was invited to accept would be more fitly done by others, no attractions however great, no pressure of entreaty would induce her to take it up. She would, in such a case, herself urge strongly that it should be offered to the other Community. But if such hindrance did not exist, she would personally examine on the spot into all the circumstances of the case, controlling her own sympathies and love of expansion, till fully satisfied that the proposed work was fitted to the Community's objects and rule, and within its power. If her own mind was satisfied on these essential points, and if the Chapter accepted the proposal, then her promptness and decision came into full play. She would go into all details, choose her instruments, press outsiders into co-operation, form links far and wide, and map out the lines and the future of the work with a quickness and breadth that almost bewildered those who did not know her well, or who were of a less venturesome or less sanguine disposition. But after experience generally showed how keen her foresight was, and how accurate her estimate of persons and things.

"The Sister chosen to bear rule in any new work would then be drawn into her close confidence, and be told all her mind. After this the trust reposed in her was so

complete as almost to be wondered at, mostly by the individual herself; but it had the effect of calling out the Sister's utmost powers and energies, while at the same time uniting her in loving loyalty to the Superior whose trust was so unbounded. No one was less tenacious of holding power in her own hands. Occasions would sometimes arise when she would widely differ from the Sister whom she herself had placed in authority, who might conscientiously object to what she wished to have done. She would in such a case allow the point to be argued fairly in her presence, never resent an appeal to a higher authority, and if the case was decided against her, she would yield her own wishes or judgment with a frankness and generosity that entailed no after allusion to the matter, no shadow of coldness between herself and the subordinate who had so far opposed her in the matter in question.

"Every fresh House or work would be watched over like a new-born child. She would like to know every detail, keep up personal knowledge of individuals connected with the work, and never pass over any opportunity of obtaining help for it. Her large-hearted love and sympathy could embrace each separate sphere of work without neglecting other interests or claims. Its growth and expansiveness never seemed to impair its strength, or lessen its warmth for those close at hand.

"From these same causes her visits to Houses at a distance were always a delight, till her health began to fail, and she became unequal to bearing any pressure of details, or entering into local difficulties. The young Superior never felt constrained, and though possibly in some cases little might be said, there was a consciousness that things

were understood, and there was a love and brightness that in itself was a help.

“If on such a visit pressing calls came accidentally, she would make allowance for the interruptions and demands of others, and would be content to find herself as nobody among strangers, amused at the mistakes sometimes made between herself and the Sister Superior of the House. While inquiring into the state of all that was going on, she would do so with a patience and courtesy remarkable in one to whom authority and organisation were so familiar; and when she found reason to alter or adjust matters, she would be extremely careful to uphold the young Sister’s authority, and the respect due to her position.”

Openings for work gradually began to offer themselves from greater distances. In 1860 the Community undertook the Oxford Penitentiary, Manor House, Holywell. Three years later Penitentiary work was begun by the Sisters at Bovey Tracey, Devon, under the Rev. the Hon. C. L. Courtenay, which quickly developed from a very small beginning in an old farmhouse into the present Devon House of Mercy, which with consent of its council became in 1874¹ a Provincial House of the Community, the number of Penitents nearly equalling that of the inmates of the Mother House at Clewer.

¹ One who took a leading part in the settlement of the terms on which the Sisters were to work the Devon House of Mercy, gives, in a letter to the author, a characteristic insight into Mother Harriet’s method of dealing in such conferences. “It was a personal interview, and as I had to make myself fully acquainted with all the bearings of the case, in order to draw up a Report of the proposed scheme, I remember my first question was; ‘Now, Mrs. Monsell, I want to know what advantage we are to get by being made into a Provincial House.’ I can

Shortly afterwards S. Andrew's Cottage, a home for occasional rest for ladies of limited means, was built near S. Andrew's Hospital, together with a row of almshouses for poor ladies, adjoining it. Out of this work has grown a Society for providing aid and sympathy to ladies in different forms of distress, under the title of "S. Andrew's Cottagers," which is now very widely extended.

Again, three years after the work was commenced at Bovey, arose S. Raphael's Convalescent Home, Torquay, for female patients,—one of the Community's own Foundations,—to which lately a ward for men has been added, through the generous beneficence of an Associate.

Some years later on, in 1872, came a call to work in Gloucestershire. The Community undertook the charge of S. Lucy's Hospital for Children, and an industrial school, situated just out of Gloucester,—a Foundation of Gambier Parry, Esq., of Highnam Court,—the Industrial Home and Orphanage afterwards being transferred by Mr. Parry, in a greatly enlarged state, to College Gardens, in Gloucester itself, with the hope, since realised, of Mission work in the cathedral city. This latter House was opened shortly after Mother Harriet's retirement.

It was after this that a yet greater venture was made and

see the smile upon her countenance, and the merry twinkle in her eyes, as she retorted, 'Now, Mr. ———, I should wish to know what advantage *we* are to get by the change.' The ice being thus broken, she at once went *in medias res* and perfectly satisfied me of the advantage we should gain. Her explanations had a similar effect on the Council, so that the proposal was carried without a dissentient voice." She had the same keen shrewd eye for business of a more material kind, and ample scope was given for her talents in this respect, together with her cultivated taste, in details connected with building, fitting, furnishing, &c., &c.

one the importance of which warrants a more detailed notice. Several American ladies had from time to time been drawn to join the Community. They gave themselves freely, without reserve as to their place of work, as other Sisters had done, but with the hope and desire that the Community might extend itself to the United States, and thus that they might some day be able to work in their own land for the good of their own people. At the time they came S. Mary's Sisterhood in New York which has been so largely blessed in its development, had not been commenced. Among these American Sisters of the Clewer Community there was one,—lately taken to her rest, and of whom, therefore, it may be said, how earnest, and devout, and how deeply loved, she was,—known in the Community as Sister Helen Margaret, known to the world as Helen Folsom. To her, aided by her family,—one well known and honoured in New York,—it was given to enable the Community to found a House in New York City, the S. John Baptist House, which has gradually become a centre from which other works have grown, especially school work and mission work among the Germans resident in the city. Since Mother Harriet's time it has become a Community in itself, having its own dependencies, still linked, as of old, with the Mother Community of Clewer and keeping its Rule, but self-governed, holding its own Chapters, managing its own funds, receiving Novices, and professing Sisters, with its own Warden, under the visitorship of the Bishop of the Diocese,—in fact, a real American Foundation.

Rapid as the progress of the Community had been, it must not be thought that there was undue haste in making doubtful attempts. Mother Harriet could wait when she saw that circumstances were not yet ripe for a commence-

ment, however attractive the work, and however earnestly she desired it. One would not ordinarily expect that so sanguine and ardent a nature could calmly brook delay; yet there was in her a real power of self-restraint, an instance of which appears in the following account given by one to whom the Community is mainly indebted for the Convalescent Hospital at Folkestone,—a work commenced in the course of the year in which Mother Harriet retired, and now enlarged to an extent that could not at the time have been anticipated.

“It was twelve years ago,” writes the lady alluded to, “when, through the pressure of a great sorrow, I was led under GOD to seek and find help and comfort in association with the Community of S. John Baptist, that I became first acquainted with the dear Mother whose loving heart seemed to open to me at once. I confided to her then my wish to become instrumental in founding a Convalescent Home, but her wise forethought and good judgment bade me wait till a fitting time might come, and it was not till four years later when, after the death of my mother, I came to reside at Folkestone, that the work was begun. The dear Mother was then in feeble health, and had been much affected by the death of her brother-in-law, Dr. Monsell. A change and rest being needful for her, she came to Folkestone, and stayed some time in my house. It was then that our close intimacy began, and I had the great privilege of holding from thenceforth constant intercourse with her, and listening to her wise counsels. I can never forget the wonderful power with which she grasped and suggested and gave form to an idea. There was a searching look in her bright eyes, so full of love and truth, that seemed to clear away all doubts and difficulties, and she made me feel that true joy

and peace can be found in God only, and in working for His glory. One could see in her the faith that can 'remove mountains.'

"Her key-note was always Prayer, and her watchword 'Go forward.' This was, I think, the great spring of her influence in gaining such unbounded confidence from those with whom she had intercourse. I can truly say that this has been my own experience, and I thank God for it."

In the following chapter it will be shown what help many beyond the bounds of the Community received from Mother Harriet, and how those who chanced at any time to be brought near to her, needing help, received an impulse which affected the current of their life. A few brief words were sometimes enough to tell upon a whole future. An instance of this remarkable power occurred in the case of one of the Community's works,—S. Anne's School, Baltonsborough, near Glastonbury,—when yet the incident which gave it birth had faded from her own memory.

"In 1854," writes one of the foundresses of that institution, then just parting from their old home, "when we came to pack up, we spent our Sunday at the House of Mercy, and Mother Harriet said to dear —— and me, 'And what are you going to do?' We said, 'We cannot tell, our home is quite unsettled.' 'When you are settled, do something to prevent these poor creatures coming here,—I mean those of the poor dependent lady class,—they are *so* unprotected.' In 1857 we settled in a new house, Orchard Neville. In 1859 S. Anne's had been begun as a middle class school for farmers' children, but this original idea was changed in 1868, and a higher class taken. We then placed it in dependence on Clewer, and the Mother came to see the work, at the time carried on in an old farmhouse with a thatched roof. After looking

over it all, and suggesting improvements, she said, 'What made you think of this?' 'You, Mother,' we answered. 'Thank GOD for it,' she said, in her own peculiar, earnest way, and then walking up the orchard, added, 'I am glad your work is at home.' I hope," the writer adds, "this short reminiscence, which touches a key-note of her grand, simple devotedness, for such it was, and which never failed in her intercourse with others, always encouraging them in any good work, may be of some use in making known what we owe to her."

During the last few months of Mother Harriet's life a lady who was permitted to have much intercourse with her kept a record of some of her last sayings. Reference will again be made to what she then lovingly recorded, but some few of these sayings, which expressly relate to her ideas of work, and of what she had learned by experience during her working days, so well accord with the object of this chapter, that they may fitly form its close; giving, as they do, a somewhat closer insight into the springs of power which animated her during the period of her activity. She was giving to her young friend lessons for her guidance.

"Do not plan out your life. Plans are God's, not yours. Leave them to Him, and let Him gradually unfold what He would have you do. Look at my life, I made no plans; I never settled what I was going to do; but all was gradually unfolded to me step by step. When I sailed out of the Bay of Naples, after my husband's death, I felt there was some work I must do for GOD, that I had health and strength to give to Him, and that I must dedicate my life and all my powers to His service. Then He showed me step by step what to do; and gradually my work com-

menced at Clewer, and my life-work grew there as Superior for twenty-five years.

"We must just keep ourselves ready to answer God's call, that is all we have to do, for we cannot tell what He may do with us. As for the organisation of work, of which we hear so much just now, I am inclined to think less of it than most people do. Certainly for the person who organises it is often dangerous, so much time and power is lost in arranging the details, in correspondence, &c., that there is but little time left for the spiritual life, which is the most important of all.

"All work must be done very simply and quietly, because God puts it into our hands to do, and then He will undoubtedly bless it. Do not allow yourself to feel overwhelmed with work. You may be fully aware of your unfitness, and long for another to do it better, but if God has told you to do certain work for Him, you must do it. Another might certainly do it better, but you have nothing whatever to do with that. God has sent you to do it, and no one else. He will give you all the strength you need to enable you to do it rightly. 'My God shall supply all your need.'

"Do not let self creep in. It is only self that makes you think about it at all, and say you cannot do it. You can do it perfectly well, if He tells you to do it, and it is not self-sought. Even if it be spiritual work, and you fear the souls of others may suffer through you, you need not fear. He has called you, and He will help you. Only trust to Him, and remember that it is not you who do it, but He Who does the work through you.

"Keep very quiet and calm, and rest in God, then He will not let you feel overwhelmed. Be as simple and natural

as possible about everything. Try always to see clearly that right is right, and wrong is wrong.

“Remember in speaking to any one you wish to help that the more earnest and unconscious of self you are, the better you will help them. Probably the words you think most telling will affect them least, while those you think nothing of GOD will use for their good. Leave all results with GOD. You are not always digging up the seeds in your garden to see how they are growing. Trust all to GOD, and He will bless your work.”

It was but a short time before Mother Harriet was called to “rest from her labours, where all her works do follow her,” that these touching lessons, drawn from a very extensive experience, were poured into willing ears.

Chapter the Tenth.

MOTHER HARRIET'S WORK OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY.

*"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching, wise
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes ;
And a heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathise.*

*"Wherever in the world I am,
In whatso'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts,
To keep and cultivate ;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on Whom I wait."*

FOSBERY'S "*Hymns and Poems*," &c.

IT is the object of this chapter to illustrate what has been already remarked, how Mother Harriet, while wholly devoted to and absorbed in the Community life and work, had lost nothing of the warm sympathies with which she had ever been drawn to "weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that do rejoice." Only as her spiritual life advanced, her tone, and the substance of her intercourse

with those in the outer world who sought and welcomed her aid, assumed an increasing spiritual depth. She influenced men as well as women. Her genial disposition, her ready frankness, her quick discernment, the practical business-like way in which she dealt with cases of spiritual, or indeed of any kind of trial and difficulty that came before her, had a very peculiar charm. Shy and reserved natures opened to her at once, and there was a breadth of experience, and a power of appreciating facts, which gave a quiet assurance. She would go straight to the point, and keep to the main issue, and it was seldom that some high principle, or some common sense judgment, or some consoling thought, was not the result of even a brief converse. If the case was one of real importance, it would become matter of lasting interest to her, of frequent inquiry, and, if need required, of unflinching diligence in giving the assistance in her power.

Of what passed in conversation, little can be recorded. But there are many letters treasured by those who have felt the value of her loving aid in times of sorrow or spiritual need, which convey an idea of the kind of cases which she was drawn to assist, and the kind of assistance she would give. A few selected instances from her correspondence, which have been kindly intrusted to the author, with permission to publish what might, as it is hoped, be more widely helpful, will best serve this purpose.

The following is a series of letters written, in the earlier days of her work at Clewer, to the eldest daughter, then quite young, of a family with whom she had lately become acquainted, on occasion of the illness and the death of the mother. The first was written when her death was daily expected; the two subsequent ones immediately on her death, when, in the keen distress of such a bereavement, the first

oppressive sense of personal responsibility involved in it, was being felt by the daughters.

“MY DEAR —, The account this morning is not so cheering as I had hoped to have heard. I had been anxious to know how the dear one was going on, and hoping to hear of advance in strength, but GOD’s loving care is best for her, and we must not wish for other than He sends. Hers is one of those cases in which one knows not what even to wish, except for herself and for you grace to have a will perfectly conformed to GOD’s Will. It is a bright and blessed home of life, and love, and rest, to which she is travelling, and GOD has dealt very gently with her on the journey hitherto, and we may trust Him to the end, even though the pang of parting and the loneliness of earth to the parted ones has in it a depth of unfathomed sorrow which nothing can heal but the hand of love, which teaches us that the healing lies in a firm trust in His Love, and a will that can believe His will is best. When I hear of her as more suffering, I long to be near enough for the carriage to fetch me to her side when she wishes for me.”

On hearing of her death she wrote immediately :

“MY DEAREST —, I will most gladly go to your —. If I can spare you anything in the way of arrangement, or be in any way a comfort to you, I shall only be too thankful. . . . Yes, dear, her happiness is the sweetest thought to rest on, and which of us would call back our loved ones? and it is blessedness in our lives to feel that link with the invisible ever drawing us upwards. But then there is the side of our own loss, and that loneliness which day by day creeps into our heart and gives us many and many an oft-

repeated struggle, ere the heart can quite echo the words, Thy Will be done. Do you not every hour feel what a blessing that consciousness on Tuesday was? GOD has dealt very gently with you and her, but I would not have you put down grief now, sooner or later it will find its course, only pray that by degrees you may learn entire submission, and draw the links of love closer and closer to each other.

“On you, dear child, whilst you are still almost a child, presses a heavy care and responsibility, and on — too a great duty; draw more and more into oneness, and GOD grant each may learn to feel the true blessing of dependence on each other, while you fill up GOD's purpose for you in being the guide and stay of all. How she loved to trace in you a growing fitness for it, and to realise the bond of unselfish love that bound you all into oneness, while she felt, as she once said to me of your father, ‘you see how fitted he is to be father and mother to them all.’ GOD bless you, dear ones.

“Ever your loving friend,

“H. MONSELL.”

The next letter followed shortly after :

“*Christmas Eve.*

“MY DEAREST —, Though I am too busy to go and look you up, I am not too busy to remember to love you, and think of and pray for you all at a season when past and present, the seen and the unseen, mingle into one, and the song of joy thrills through earth and heaven, rising above all sorrow, all sadness, and toning down and sanctifying all joy, till all hearts find their meeting place in one universal song of adoration and love.

“Give Christmas greetings and blessings from me to each

and all, with special tender love and sympathy to your father, and to dear —— very special love.”

These three letters were the opening of a long and constant correspondence, and a warm and lasting friendship. Those which follow are selections, extracts from letters to the same young friend, written from time to time to help and comfort her under the changing phases of her new position.

The following relates to a near relative of the family.

“About 2 p.m. —— appeared . . . he is so specially full of spiritual life, I know no man more so,—whenever one gets deep enough down below the surface life which we all wear more or less as a mask, one gets at this spiritual world of inward craving which feels that earth cannot satisfy the life within that is made for immortality. We all agreed how much of life is spoiled by the incessant chaff of the day,—I am sure it is a great temptation and a great loss to our better being. One’s deeper self starves instead of growing, and souls who would strengthen and cheer each other on the journey onwards lose this blessing because of the passing rubbish for which they can care nothing. I wonder how this could be altered, I am sure no one seriously stands still and looks at a day’s talk without wishing it bore better grain, and they would in their better moments throw half the chaff at least to the winds, and yet ponderous preaching talk is not what one wants, nor canting talk, nor surface discussions of controversial subjects, nor any appearance of being better than one’s neighbours. Still there is an indescribable want, and loss, in this everlasting hiding under this guise of all that is best and noblest in us, of all that forms the meeting point of soul with soul, all in us that has an undying life. It is easy for an old woman like me who lives

at the other side of life, and knows that abiding rest is only found by living above in a calm nest, formed nearer heaven than earth, to get into this broad expanse of spiritual life, where there is a perpetually renewed and renewing beauty of landscape, and brightness of colouring, that throws a glow over all; but for you young ones there is a journey of some kind to be made ere you can mingle the brightness of earth with the brightness of Divine Life. Perhaps the neutral tints of life have not been laid on heavily enough as yet for you to be able to blend into oneness what seems so opposite, and yet they are not opposed, they are in truth one, and never look so lovely as when they are seen through the light transparent colouring of youth. What is it that is wanting? I suppose it is a deeper love of Him Who is the source of life and of brightness, a deeper realising that as the unseen, almost unspoken, parts of our being are the deepest, almost the only real part of our lives, so the unseen verities on which we must muse in stillness, and the unfelt union with Him Who is our life, are in truth the realities of our mysterious selves which are ever craving, and never can be satisfied till we are drawn above the chaff of earth into the good fruit of a life of holiness and union with God. You must think, or rather pray, out this subject in the stillness of some of your life in Scotland, where there is more time for thought and less need for constant action, and tell me what you arrive at when we meet."

To the same, with advice as to her own spiritual self-discipline and the general family life:

"... All spiritual life is a growth through different stages; (1) The conquest of actual sin such as we feel we must and ought to struggle against. (2) Then the gradual rising beyond the struggle into a state when the soul seems growing

and deepening on all sides, and the inward consciousness is increasing, that the immortal within can find no rest till it has found its repose in GOD; and this is a time of long, and slow, and gradual growth, great worlds to travel in here. There is a distinct consciousness that we mean to be on GOD's side, we mean to give Him our heart. This is a time when oftentimes the only appearance of progress we have is the longing not to fall back, and then something comes and opens a long vista before us, and we see the way to walk in, and live more in the sunshine of GOD's Presence; and then (3) comes that wondrous state of Divine love and union, when the soul is fixed steadfastly in regions above earth, and comes down to touch earth only in ministries of love, and with a will wholly one with the Divine Will—a life of beatitude when all has been offered up, and we are wholly one with GOD—that life which our LORD speaks of, S. John xiv. 23. But we must plod on a bit yet, ere we reach this, though it helps us to catch glimpses of it, and makes us feel at times we could give up all to attain to it.

“As the middle state is the one for the present, I suppose to each earnest soul the practical question of how to walk in it in their circumstances, is the one we all need answered, and which, if we ask faithfully, GOD will teach us day by day.

“Now for all you young things, whose duty lies in being agreeable, jolly, kind to every one; living a life without much to do, but that which seems self-pleasing, is an anxious question. And yet that is manifestly GOD's will and purpose for you. In your own case you have added to it large cares and duties which you have always and very wisely and rightly made it a point not to make look like cares and duties. There is GOD's way of living this life,

and here is the question, How? Very difficult to answer, for I think the perfectly holy young girl would combine so much of a Divine life, mingling in with the brightness and happy influence on all around, without that weary nothingness which is the bane of that life. Still she would not be pedantic or canting.

“It will give you something to do to meditate on this as you sit looking into the sea, and learning great wisdom from it, for I always think the sea is a wise teacher, it is so boundless, so constant in its motion, so still in its deep heart, so unvarying and yet so varying in the fulfilment of its appointed task. And after all it is solved by the one amazing thought of ‘CHRIST in us, the hope of glory,’ in the gradual clearing of the mists of self and sin, and pride, &c., that dim the crystal vase of our tabernacle which contains the Divine life,—while we grow into the meekness and gentleness, the poorness of spirit, and the purity of heart, which are the manifestations of the Divine Indwelling.”

To the same, when needing encouragement :

“Do not doubt GOD’s love. He draws us by His Love to love Him, and though we can at first catch but transient gleams of feeling, still they are true, and as we are faithful brighten up into a steady glowing light, becoming more and more abiding as we wear on and bear on, yielding ourselves more and more to the drawings of Divine Love. We love Him because He first loved us. All true heart religion springs from the faith that lays hold of that Love, and makes it one’s *very own*.”

To the same, on the announcement of a hope that a brother would seek to be admitted into Holy Orders :

“I am so pleased to hear about ——, both for his sake

and all of yours. How gently God deals with His children, sending the sunshine with the rain, always giving us tokens of His tenderness, of His Love. With what a sweet smile and earnest-hearted joy *she* would have greeted these tidings for her dearly loved son, and yet still her joy will be more complete, as each one of her loved ones is drawn nearer to God, nearer to her in God, and in more entire conformity to His Will. The link that binds us to those within the veil is invisible, we dare not strive to penetrate too much, and yet how truly our hearts tell us it is not broken."

To the same, in reference to the destiny of the Sisters :

" — seems very true to her vocation. I hope she will get stronger when the struggle is over ; it must be a hard struggle for her, but I doubt not she has heard the call and will follow. For you, dear, home has such a call, that I doubt if it is not God's place for you. Get closer and closer into the heart of JESUS ; let every part of your being come under the discipline and power of His Life, and be among them all the strength and revelation of that life,—this, I doubt not, is your true vocation."

To the same, on the question of how to reconcile social and religious duties :

" I can quite sympathise with your feeling, but I think you were right to go to Holy Communion. It was a moment in which God spoke to your soul, and you might have missed a blessing if you had not gone. I am far from thinking it possible to serve God and the world,—but living in the world is not serving the world. It is as much your duty to entertain in your father's house, as it is ours to invite the outer world to our Commemoration Day. I believe Houses like ours are a great blessing, and a great rest to people living in the world. One knows that everywhere

the heart has to be guarded with a jealous care for GOD ; but as it was your duty to be at your own entertainment, surely there was nothing inconsistent in seeking to have our Blessed LORD present with you there. What GOD says is, 'My son, give Me thine heart.' Give that to GOD, and then you will find all fall into its place,—the home duties, the watchfulness over one's own inner life, the devotion to GOD, and the life of usefulness."

To the same, as to her own spiritual progress :

" I send you some meditations, they contain so much teaching which comes out to the soul as you use them, not as a book to read through, but as points to meditate on. I feel sure you will find much in them to meet thoughts in your own mind, and deeper stirrings of your spiritual being ; it is always a help to find the response in another mind to what one is just beginning to grasp for oneself. All closer drawing of the soul to GOD is the more personal consciousness of the union between us and CHRIST, the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST, and our part in the Mystery of the Incarnation. From this first consciousness there opens before the soul the whole life of the following of our LORD ; for each of us He has traced the pathway through the darkness of earth, and as we get into it we see here and there the light glowing from the footprints of JESUS, and as we follow we leave a track of light that we have received from Him, to be the guide, and the stay, and the comfort, of those whom we are permitted to shine for and lighten. Our light is bright, because it is the Light of CHRIST shining through us, and we must let the stirrings of love which He kindles in our hearts grow, and deepen, and strengthen, and increase into that fulness of light and love

which He has ordained for us. The grace of GOD is ever being shed abroad in our hearts, but it is long before we open our hearts to receive it, and when it is a little opened, long before we cast out everything that impedes its inflowing. Thus we read back the history of all our past life, and thus when moments come in our lives that make us stand still, we learn to read the future; and then comes the question, how will we read it? how much give up to GOD? If we will make a response worthy of His love, first listen to what He says—He says, ‘My son, give Me thine heart,’ and if we will make the true and satisfying response, we say with generous love, ‘I will give it.’ But weigh well what the gift means,—your very self; what a gift is,—it is given, not to be taken back; to Whom you give it,—it is to the Crucified, to Him Who says, ‘Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.’ It matters not what our future course is, if once we give our heart to GOD. It may be given in home life, in married life, in the consecrated life. Each has different outward forms, each different responsibilities, but the given heart is one and the same in all. God bless you, dear —.

“Ever yours very affectionately,

“H. MONSELL.”

To the same, on difficulties in the soul’s progress :

“ . . . I hope you can soon write and give me a cheery account of yourself and dear —. I shall hope when she comes home to get to see her. . . . I do not wonder at discouraged states coming over her soul. The spiritual life of the soul is of such a tender texture, we can grasp with our faith so much more than we bring into practice, and the inconsistency of the two is perplexing to the soul. But

GOD is Love, and the more simply we lay hold on His love, and the more we strive to love Him, without too much perplexing ourselves over our own inconsistencies, the better. Tell her to try and rest in the thought of GOD's love, and as she dwells on it, she will herself grow more into loving GOD, and being loved by Him, and when once love to GOD really takes possession of the soul, all the rest quickly follows."

To the same, on the sickness of one of the members of the family :

"I shall be very glad to see dear ——, and trust my visit may bring peace and comfort to her. Tell her, with my love, to try and rest like a little child in the tender arms of a loving Father ; we do not enough realise the love of GOD, which JESUS has purchased for us,—bought us back with that love, not because we are worthy, but because He has first loved us. Tell her to say frequently, ' Hold thee still in the LORD, and abide patiently upon Him,'—safe, hidden in the loving heart of JESUS,—none can pluck her out of His arms, and in all her doubts and fears she has but to run and hide herself there. She takes her eyes off JESUS, and looks on the sea and the waves and the enemies around, and then she sinks. Let her but look steadfastly unto JESUS, and she will find she can walk steadfastly, and JESUS will stretch out His hand to uphold her."

Mention was made in one of the above letters of the intention of one of the brothers of the same family to take Holy Orders, but the idea was at last given up, and it was on hearing of this change that she wrote to him the following letter :

"MY DEAR ——, Well, it is a bright dream of mine passed away, but it is far better that it should be so, than

that you should take Orders without a full clear purpose. These are days when to go forward in any form of religious life, I mean, bearing the standard of the Cross, one must go well prepared at every point to tread the way of the Cross, and if you cannot with a whole heart say, 'We are able,' then better not to set out on that path. — will no doubt be sorry, very sorry, but she would not have had you a priest without a clear call. No, the follower of the Crucified must bear the marks of the Crucified. I do not think your father will for a moment feel you had one unworthy motive, . . . and now, dear —, as a layman, you must strive to live to glorify GOD.

"Thanks for the rose from my home,¹—the only spot of earth I ever call, or shall call, home. I build up, as GOD permits me, Homes for His children, but mine is within those rails in that bright, sunny land.

"I am so glad you have seen, and enjoyed Sorrento. I spent two summers there, and know its charms well. I visit other lands, but I dare not go to Naples, to wake up the memories of life in its earth's sunshine. Now, it has one unclouded sunshine, but it is not from earth. It plays amid the flowers of Paradise, it is with me within the veil, and shines so bright that the spot of earth under my feet each day wherever they tread, is always bathed in its light."

The next series of letters express different lines of thought, and were written under different circumstances. They were addressed to a young friend whose acquaintance with Mother Harriet was quite casually made, and who afterwards, even till within a few days of her death, continued to look to her

¹ Meaning her husband's grave.

for spiritual advice, and who became a medium of obtaining like help for others.

Her account of the manner in which the acquaintance commenced is an instance of how casually, as it seemed, openings occurred for Mother Harriet's kindly aid.

"My first meeting with Mrs. Monsell took place in 1870. I was staying with relations of hers, and during my visit she came to spend a night with them. At that time I much wished to become the Associate of some Sisterhood, and finding myself in the society of the Mother Superior of Clewer, I longed to speak to her on the subject; but the opportunity was difficult to find, for I knew she was leaving early the next morning.

"I was very young; she had scarcely spoken to me, or noticed me since her arrival, and I felt it would be presuming to encroach upon her time which was so fully occupied by others. At length, however, just as we were separating for the night, I ventured to say timidly, 'May I ask you a little about Sisterhoods to-morrow morning before you go?'

"She looked at me for a moment, as if surprised by the question, then added kindly, 'I am leaving very early to-morrow, so I must see you to-night: go to your room, sit down by your fire, and I will come and pay you a visit presently.' That visit was the beginning of a lifelong friendship; a friendship for which I thank God as one of His greatest gifts. I began by asking her questions upon Sisterhood life, and from this went on to many a subject near my heart, until I had told her all the trials and difficulties of my life, and received comfort and advice in return which was a constant source of help and blessing for many a year after.

"From that day forward she became one of my dearest friends. Her letters to me, and our conversations together

at Clewer or elsewhere, have been some of the greatest spiritual helps of my life. Our happy intercourse continued unbroken during her life, and I was allowed the privilege of being much with her at Folkestone, only a few weeks before she was taken from us.

“The following letters have been of so much comfort and help to myself and to many of my friends, that I trust they may be equally helpful to others.

“The first was written for a friend who was going through a time of spiritual darkness and desolation.

“The second contains valuable hints as to correspondence, and the arrangement of time.

“The third gives practical advice to a young lady living an easy idle life in a luxurious home.

“The fourth was written to me during a long visit to friends, when my time was so fully occupied as to leave little space for the spiritual life.

“The fifth I received during a long illness which obliged me to relinquish all active work. This was almost the last letter I received written by her own hand. A few months later she ended a letter with the words, ‘Eyes and hands both seem to say, they have done enough, and I must soon give up.’

“From that time I rarely wrote to her; not wishing to add to her labours in any way, but her interest in her correspondents remained as strong as ever, and the letters dictated by her during her latter years will ever be treasured by all who were fortunate enough to receive them.”

I.

“MY DEAR —, Thanks for the Angel of Prayer, a very helpful visitant to come to one on S. John’s Day.

L

"I am very thankful for what you say of yourself, and trust your life may have an ever deepening calmness in the midst of whatever activities of soul or body GOD may call you to exercise. I am sure you feel with this calmness increasing powers of going out of yourself into GOD.

"And now about your friend ; do not be the least disturbed, GOD has given him great powers, and from your account enlarged desires, to use them for His glory. Then why is he led through the wilderness? 'to humble him and to prove him'—the night of desolation comes to the souls that aim high, and have great desires, and may last long or short, as GOD wills. Some great Saints have had to pass through it for years, and out of it the soul comes with a great strength, because it has found GOD in the darkness. Those words, 'And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where GOD was,' are very wonderful.

"He must not get indifferent to this state, and he must look very carefully to see if it is caused by any sin, or self-love in any form ; if it is, the work is clear, there must be a most careful cleansing of the soul. But if it arise from no special cause that can be discovered, then the soul must bow down meekly and say, 'It is the LORD, let Him do what seemeth Him good ;' 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him ;' and he may walk on in peace, but ever reaching out in the darkness to find Him Who is the Light, and Who may shine out at his side at any moment, and show him how very near He has been all the time.

"Some time let me hear if your friend has got into the Light, but if he is true and humble and faithful do not feel dismayed because GOD keeps him long in the darkness.

"I shall like to see the hymns when they are out. Write to me whenever I can be of any help to you. Always re-

member when we set out to follow our dear JESUS, it must be from Bethlehem to Calvary and to the holy hill and to the dwelling of GOD. Many a weary step has to be trod in the footsteps of JESUS, and if we can help and uphold each other by the way, it is of GOD'S love, and a thing to be thankful for.

“Ever yours affectionately,

“S. HARRIET, Sup^r.

“Com. S. John Baptist.

“GOD bless and strengthen you, and give you at this time a great blessing of peace from the Prince of Peace.”

2.

“I think my shortest way of answering your question is by altering your time-table and saying, take from 12 to 1 three days for reading, three days for writing letters, and as a rule make your letters as short as possible without curtness. I believe one may say exactly the same thing in few words as in many, if one practises it,—but there is a great deal in getting just the right medium, for one may be too short and dogmatic,—still to cut in words both in writing and in speaking and yet preserve meekness, gentleness, and tenderness, is a great gain.

“Let the brothers have their full share of your thoughts, your time, and your prayers. Let your young lady friends have your help and your sympathy without becoming dependent, which is what people are always fond of being, while their duty is to stand on their own legs, not yours,—and you only want to help them to do this. And for yourself, my dear child, let simplicity and humility be your great aim ; just to do GOD'S work for GOD alone,—without an atom of

self-love in it. This is *your* aim, keep it ever true and pure, and all will come right."

3.

"A Priest of much experience has given me the enclosed aids for your friend. (Here followed some rules for the particular case.)

"Practically I advise her to learn a language, or enter on some safe intellectual employment that will occupy her mind.

"We have such great capacities in our being that pine for occupation, and people hardly estimate the blessing of really learning so as thoroughly to master one or two things ; it braces up the whole being. Young ladies' lives are generally so desultory, or so unchastened and irregular, let her lay down some gentle moderate Rule for her life, possible under her circumstances to keep, and then she will see how often she breaks it, perhaps through day-dreaming, or overhaste, or undertaking too many things. But one must remember while aiming after it faithfully, how very difficult it is to lead a really chastened life, so she must not be over-anxious or discouraged ; discouragement is one of Satan's tools he loves to use to keep us back from GOD.

"I trust you are better, and that this new year will bring you many blessings, teaching you that deep lesson GOD has for you, 'their strength is to sit still.'

"GOD bless you and your friends, tell them to struggle on bravely, and not murmur at not having any help GOD withholds from them. He knows best what we need, and if only we will be His children, His faithful children, He will be sure to take care of us.

"Ever yours very affectionately,

"S. HARRIET, Sup^r C. S. J. B."

4.

“For yourself I feel more inclined to prescribe. You cannot live without quiet time for prayer, for reading, and cherishing your spiritual life,—and I think it cannot be right for you to give up this side of your life for *any* consideration of friendship or anything on earth. God has the first claim on your life,—give Him what is His due, and then do what you will with the rest, but clearly no life can go on well, or continue to go on, in which you sacrifice what is due to God. . . .

“There should be no talking after eleven at night, and you ought to have a quiet uninterrupted hour for prayer and meditation in the morning. You would be a far better companion afterwards, for your own soul having taken in light, could give out light . . . but clearly life will not go on with you as you are now doing, there will simply be a break down somewhere or somehow.

“For the other matter it is quite one of vocation—if God calls you both to a life of closer union with Him—and JESUS says, ‘Follow Me,’ then ‘faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it.’ You can in obedience to His call leave all to follow, and be His alone. But the more you strive to lead this life, the more it must be maintained by prayer, and inward tranquillity and contemplation, thus the soul upheld is able to meet the wear of outward life, but we must meet it with a filled, not with an empty vessel of our being,—thus being at rest within it is easy to live for, and act on others—one’s own life is satisfied in God. Do not, dear, enter on the one life without the fulness of the other; and if we would be filled, we must wait upon God.”

5.

"Many days have passed since I got your letter ; when it came I was in Retreat, and since then I have been with a Sister who was very dangerously ill, so I have had no quiet time to write.

"So you, poor child, you have got to sit still when you wanted to be doing so much. How often GOD thus lays His hand on our activity to make quite sure that we live only in His will.

"You must not think there is much to be done. GOD can do that in His own way, and He is teaching you there is much to be done *in* you in His own way. You have given yourself to Him, you are His, let Him then use you as He will.

"No, dear, it will not be a refreshing time, because as you say, there is no thinking ; but it will be a perfecting time, for when is the being most perfect ? Is it not when it has simply learned conformity to GOD's will ? Try and learn this ; it will cost you a great deal to learn to lay aside all activity and simply commune with GOD in the quiet resting in Him,—but when you learn it, you will find it is the highest reach of the soul ; GOD's will, my all—not bent this way or that, but just simply as GOD wills. Get 'Hymns for the Sick and Lonely,' written by C. Noel, my cousin ; she wanted to be an active Sister of Mercy, and GOD has made her for years a quiet sufferer.

"I doubt going over to Ireland being the best thing for you ; do not force circumstances, let it all be as GOD guides.

"I am glad to hear of —, I trust she will grow more and more into the fulness of peace, and find how to joy in GOD in the midst of sorrow.

"Love to your father and mother. GOD be with you : say only very little ejaculatory prayers, and take one or two words

to dwell on,—such as Holy, Holiness, Love, Calmness, Stillness in GOD, and live them, and you will grow into them.

“Ever your loving friend and Mother,
“S. H., Supr.”

Another, living in the world, though in great retirement, speaks of the exceeding value of the help she gained from Mother Harriet. “She was very dear in writing to me, and when I recall the trouble she took, how she at times placed herself on a level with one in talking over things which she desired one should see in a different light, I feel deeply great gratitude and love to her.

“It was once when tempted to make too light of home life, she wrote to me as follows: ‘To glorify GOD in the world is a special calling, to keep the heart close to GOD, to be recollected and yet kindly to all, to be so truly and simply walking by the rule of a Christian life in the home life, is no light calling. Glorify GOD there, and He may yet permit you to glorify Him in the more separated life; but do not for a moment think lightly of your present calling, GOD places you there, accept it from Him, and live for Him in it.’

“And again, on our moving into the country, having previously lived in a town, she wrote again; ‘One little loving line to cheer you in your new abode, home you cannot yet learn to call it, I trust it may be full of blessing to you. You will be able to lead a simpler life, one more quietly in stillness with GOD,—the soul learning more and more what it is to put on CHRIST, to be transformed. We want all this, but we hardly estimate the greatness of what we want, and all it needs. I hope you may be helped to know and to live the life of faith. I hope your mother will get happy there, and find her child a great blessing to her.’”

It is to be borne in mind, that the power shown in these letters, of entering into the needs of others, of going forth to meet them, and of so clearly and fully advising remedies in various cases, was being exercised up to the very close of her working days, and while the countless daily calls and anxieties of her own special work were continually increasing.

Further instances of this loving care reaching out thus widely, will be given in the following chapter.

Chapter the Eleventh.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*"Nothing is true but love, nor aught of worth ;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth."*

TRENCH'S Poems.

THERE was a young layman with whom Mother Harriet was brought into communication, who regarded her with a son's grateful affection, and who from time to time sought her advice. The following letters will give some idea of the substance and tone of the advice she would give in such a case :

"House of Mercy, Clewer, Windsor.

"MY DEAR —, I will do the best I can to help you. First, on the very difficult subject of free-will, no doubt there are endless learned books to be read, but I fancy it must still remain a mystery to the intellect, to be accepted as much must be when GOD and man are concerned, which we cannot understand on this side the veil.

"GOD is sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. GOD is in heaven, in hell ; GOD fills all, knows all ; and yet it is certain that it has been His sovereign will to create a creature which He wills to transform into Himself, wills

should catch the Light, as it were, and reflect His glory with a perfect freedom of will. We choose at every step in life, this path or that path, this person or that; in every moment of our life we are choosing between good and evil,—those who are most recollected, most restrained, are most conscious of this choice; and then, when we come to the higher phases of spiritual life,—to what are called the counsels of perfection,—then I feel convinced that GOD in some way, or at some time, asks the soul, ‘Can ye drink of the cup?’ &c., and each has, and does say for himself, ‘We are able.’ So you see all through the chain of our life runs the free-will. The mystery of mysteries, and yet the keynote of all, is the Incarnation,—that GOD should have taken our nature into Himself, and so made us partakers of the Divine Life. Angels are pure beings, created of GOD, but not united to GOD, as man is, and these Angels who watch round us and accompany our steps, cannot move our will, though no doubt in a thousand ways they uphold, and strengthen, and minister to us.

“Now about sin. Surely the remedy GOD has appointed in His Church lies in confession and absolution. People who have never used the ordinance may speculate as they like about it, but the blessing after true contrition and true confession, of hearing, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace,’ is intense. We forestall the particular judgment of the soul by bringing our souls and our lives to the judgment of GOD here, and when we sin again and again,—not I mean wilful sin, for we must not, and cannot do that when there is true contrition,—but from the evil tendencies of our nature, from the weakness of our will, from the infirmities of our being,—we must apply the remedy over and over again. We have not merely to put away sin, but we have

to grow in holiness, and holiness is the unfolding of the Divine life in us, and it is unfolded *by penitence*, that is, contrition,—*by knowledge*, for when we seek to draw nearer to GOD how much we want to know,—and *by union*, which is GOD Himself uniting us to, and transforming us into, Himself.

“Dear —, it is a great joy to me to see you as earnest about your soul as a layman, as if you had taken Orders ; and now that your path in life seems freed, and will only be an opening out of more power, more influence, it is a great point that you should be one of those laymen whom GOD raises up to stand as pillars in the Church, and in the coming struggle who can say which will have most to sustain the Church’s life, the clergy or the laity ?

“May GOD bless and guide you. You know well, from having thought it out, that a life of sacrifice must be a whole burnt offering. GOD be with you and bless you.

“Ever your affectionate friend,

“H. MONSELL.”

To the same :

“MY DEAR —, I am very grateful for the Easter offering to the hospital, it will entitle you to some admissions. Sister — will write about this.

“Do not be over-anxious about your Communions, say constantly, ‘LORD, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief,’ and light will come. You will find some nice chapters about it at the end of Thomas à Kempis. The great thing is to get one’s intellect as enlightened as possible without bringing reason to be the umpire, and then pray ; and faith and spiritual illumination will come in GOD’s time, and when it

does really come, you will have found a pearl of great price.

"Sin is sin, and the distinction of mortal sin, which the conscience tells one is sin, and sins of infirmity which one struggles against, but which, with all one's struggling, take time to overcome, is another thing. The one is a grave that one knows one must get out of or it is certain death, the other, one is always struggling to be free from, yet always travelling onwards,—struggling on. . . .

"Ever yours, very affectionately,

"H. MONSELL."

To the same :

"Clever.

"MY DEAR —, I am so glad you wrote to me, especially now before Easter, if I can help you to make your Easter Communion with a more *living* sense of our LORD's Presence in It, I shall be most thankful. A book that would help you is, 'The Sacraments and Sacramental Ordinances, by John Henry Blunt.' (Rivingtons.)

"If we can once get to accept the Mystery which we can never fathom, and believe in the Gift which we cannot understand, we gain a new Life in the union with JESUS Who is our Life, through the partaking of His Body and Blood. This was the mode which His wisdom took to communicate to us this precious Gift, just as the Crucifixion was the suffering He took wherewith to redeem mankind. It was all in the sovereign will of GOD,—reason cannot fathom it. The Catechism says, 'The Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are *verily* and *indeed* taken and received by the faithful in the LORD's Supper.' The benefits of the Sacrament so received are 'the strengthening and refreshing.'

"I think, if you will get Blunt's book, you will find the whole doctrine of the Sacrifice most clearly stated, and it is worth your while to get clear and distinct knowledge on this subject, because illumination of the mind is an aid to faith.

"You do quite right in saying Holy Communion would be quite a different source of joy to you, if you believed in the Real Presence.

"As regards the two lives. I do not think you would be the better for withdrawing from all society; another set of temptations would arise, and perhaps what are quite as dangerous though more subtle; but what we all have to do in our vocation, whatever it is, is to be quite sure we stand on GOD's side,—and doing this will always cause us to use GOD's gifts without abusing them, and as for His glory. How rightly to mix in the world's life, even in a moderate degree, needs much inward self-discipline and self-restraint, much watchfulness to be true to GOD, and a fixed rule as to what one will and will not do. All this needs a very true conscientious dealing with oneself.

"As regards fasting, I am quite sure, for you, your rule will do. *You* could not do more, it would unfit you not only for work, but for the struggle with yourself. But a strong man, full of a strong nature and great vitality, would need to abstain more to bring the body into subjection.

"A very jealous guard against little or great self-indulgence would, in your case, be the true point of attack. May GOD give you much grace to finish up this Lent with a firm resolve to stand boldly on GOD's side in life, and with some few, very few, but very telling resolves which you will persevere in.

"Write to me at any time if I can help you. I am so glad you have got — church to go to,—it will be a great help to you. Write to me again when the light comes.

"Ever yours very affectionately,

"H. MONSELL."

A yet closer and more frequent intercourse was for several years kept up with one whose life was passed in home duties, and whom Mother Harriet first knew as devotedly employed in nursing an invalid mother. The first letter alludes to her chief and most anxious charge.

"MY DEAR —, I was very sorry to hear of your great anxiety about your mother. I trust your account may be considered favourable, and shall be very glad to hear again from you after awhile. How an illness like this, touching one so closely, making one feel one's entire dependence on GOD, and shaking, as it were, the roots of one's life, makes one feel the littleness of many things we have often thought were of immense importance, and that which is of real value shines out with true light ! It is a great blessing to be taught this, even through suffering, and a shadow like this passing over one's happy home, makes one hold one's blessings with a more trembling and yet a more thankful, loving hold. God bless and be with you all. Remember me very affectionately to —.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"H. M."

The following letter to the same refers to a sick sister under her care :

"MY DEAREST —, So thankful to hear the better account of dear —. Give her my love and blessing. It is not easy to bear pain well, so she must just do the next best thing, bear it as well as she can. Pain is in itself a sharp discipline, and hard to bear. I sometimes think we want to make too light of things. Pain *is* pain, sorrow *is* sorrow, and GOD alone Who sends it knows how real our efforts may be to bear that which He means us to feel very keenly."

Sympathy with the anxieties which the friend addressed in these letters had to bear, led on to the deeper work of helping her in the care of her soul, and the overcoming her faults.

The following letter is the first of a series, and was written in response to a request for help in her spiritual life.

"MY DEAR —, I am glad you have written, and hope to be able to help you as GOD permits. The temper must be got under. Of this there can be no doubt; but it will cost you a great deal, and can only be done little by little. Try and find out how often you fail through pride, or independence of spirit, or self-love in some form, and then try and gain the contrary virtue. Practise yourself in little acts of humility and self-restraint. Never be ashamed to say openly, I have been wrong. A little very earnest effort will no doubt greatly help. Try and make your meditation fall in with the effort by taking specially our LORD's humility to dwell on. Consider the GOD-Man in the helplessness of infancy; the obedience of childhood; the gentleness of manhood; the patient meekness in suffering. See how He took the humiliations of the Passion and the Cross. Dwell on it in detail, considering one point after

another, a little at a time. Try to be very true to the time you give to meditation,—if five minutes, be sure you keep quite to the time; then give ten minutes; then fifteen. This would be enough for you, only keep still in the attitude of prayer, or adoration, or humiliation. You need not always kneel through your meditation, though it is better to do so, but if uneasy, seat yourself on the floor, only try to keep still with your point of meditation before you. The power will grow, and you will begin to take delight in it. God bless you. Give my love to —.

“Ever your affectionate

“H. M.”

This was followed by the next letter, after an interval of about two months.

“MY DEAR —, I have not been able to write sooner, because I have been very busy and very tired. I cannot let you be in the least discouraged because you find difficulties in your path. Who ever set out on the journey of self-conquest, and found it easy? Your consciousness of the difficulties is the best proof you can have of real earnestness. While gliding down with the stream the bark goes easily, but when we come to pull up against it, it is a different story. So do not be discouraged, but you must be brave, and you must do penance for faults. The penance is the acknowledgment that you have been wrong. We Church of England people ask for a right, true, downright penance when we ask for one at all. A few such acknowledgments will make you more watchful; besides, they will help to break the stubborn neck of self. Self has a thousand, yes, ten thousand heads, and the neck of each must

be broken ere self is so dead in us, that we can really say, 'I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me.' So, dear, you see we must be up and in earnest; GOD bless and strengthen you in the effort. Be very faithful, and you will be sure to conquer. I have just seized a little moment before Church time. How is ——? give her my love, and to —— too.

"Ever yours very affectionately,
"S^R. HARRIET, Sup^r."

After another interval of about two months she writes again, giving further advice :

"MY DEAR ——, I send some meditations, will you copy and return them? As regards fasting, do what you can in simple ways. Fix on three definite acts of self-denial,—one as regards food, one as regards words, one as regards habits of self-indulgence; and watch carefully about these points, being very faithful to your resolve. Try little things, not great things. Little things very faithfully done, will advance you on your way more than great efforts in which you would break down. I write in the midst of many interruptions, and yet do not like to delay longer.

"Ever yours affectionately,
"H. MONSELL."

These letters are a sample of a more than twenty years' correspondence. There are two or three more that seem important to select in addition to those already given, as bearing on the same subject of self-conquest.

"MY DEAR ——, You must not be discouraged; yours is not an enemy easily overcome. I think you would do

better if you did not let discouragement come over you when you first fail in temper. But you are given to feel it is no good, and so in the moment of temptation do not bring the needful pressure to bear. Silence is a great help, and though at first silence may seem moodiness, yet that will pass, if you only try to keep with GOD in the silence. . . ."

About a year later, other advice seemed to be needful, —encouragement to persevere after a period of depression.

"MY DEAR —, Day after day I have been going to write to you, but I knew you wanted more than a mere loving scrap, and I had not the quiet. Life looks a wee bit dreary to you just now, and there is a time perhaps in every one's life when it looks dreary. One has to pass out of the stage of hope and expectations, which for a long time in life carries one on, to look at it in its quiet realities of dulness and common-place duties and monotonous routine. And yet here we have to glorify GOD. We were created for GOD's glory, and life is the stage in which we can glorify Him. It is in well facing this fact that you will find your rest. The thought of Madame de Chantal, whose life you read, will help you. There is no escaping this training by which the soul is to be transformed, changed as it may be from one thing into another; from the natural into the supernatural. Realise that this is the great work of your life, the end of your being. The pathway may be strewn with flowers or with crosses. It must be pretty much alike to us which,—if the crosses are more apparent, the flowers are sure to be hidden among them; if the flowers shine out

and attract the eye, the crosses are sure to be hidden among them.

"There is a vocation for you in this sorrow,—what it is, or has called you to, neither you nor I can tell. It has not had any outward end, and yet there is no doubt a call. Self-sacrifice is written upon it,—doing the daily duties of life cheerfully when they look very dull, because love is written upon it, clothing all one's words and movements with love, when nature feels cold and dull and unloving; hope is written upon it, when there does not seem even a blade of grass for hope to feed on on earth, and so hope has to look upwards to find a resting-place for its tiny feet.

"Formerly, dear, the struggle was to overcome temper; now, the struggle is to overcome a worse enemy, dreariness. And I believe that a quiet, aimless life lived in the sunshine of God's will can be bathed in light, and be a gladness, and a warmth, and cheer to others, simply because we have become so dead to ourselves and our own will. We live but to reflect His light and give this warmth to others. Now I must say good night.

"Ever your loving friend,

"H. MONSELL."

Again, about a year later, she was led to write on hearing from this friend, of her experience of further trial.

"MY DEAREST —, I am so glad you have provoked a letter from me. No doubt humility is the point we all need, I mean specially need, as we strive to grow into, and be partakers of the Divine Life, because it is that which likens us to our LORD. 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' There is the dying down of self, and the livingness

of the Life of GOD in us. It is not humble acts, or restrained looks and words, though they must exist and be the expression of the life within, but it is, as a writer says, that 'the soul makes lowliness its aim, it touches the very substance of our being.' Practically speaking, I think the best way to help oneself to see how to attain it, is to draw two pictures of oneself. One, what one would be if lowliness were the whole aim of one's life. Picture in writing one's own practical daily life steeped in lowliness after the pattern of our Blessed LORD, and then draw out with the same exactness of detail the hindrances one sees in oneself to this lowliness. Then you get a true ground for self-restraint, self-annihilation, in details, and a true model on which to form one's own life. By faithfully keeping this before one year after year, one may hope a little to reach after, and be transformed into, the Divine image.

"This is not the mere being good, it is the definite surrender of oneself and one's life at any cost. Dearest —, I feel GOD has been calling you to the highest point of union with His Divine Life, and you must aim to be very true in following. And that following is not in the outer actions of your life, though they are the bulwarks and stays of it; but it is in the inner surrender of the soul, the willingness that self should suffer, be buffeted, cut down, cease to exist,—no longer, 'I like,' but that GOD wills it; that life that has no will but to respond unhesitatingly to the Divine Will. One by one everything must be offered to GOD. The dead self has given up all to GOD. The dying self offers it to GOD a thousand times, and then shrinks back and takes to itself that which it has offered. But GOD loves us too well, and is too true with us not to oblige us to be true with Him.

“GOD bless you, dear, and strengthen you to yield a glad obedience to so glorious a call. It is an exceeding weight of glory to feel on us the touch of His Divine Hand; the being called by name. We surrender our own individuality, because GOD in His love has individualised us, and called us with a special call. GOD bless you, dear, more and more.

“Ever your loving friend,

“&c., &c.”

This series of letters may be closed with one written to convey Christmas greetings two years after the last, to another member of the same family.

“MY DEAR CHILD,—I must send you a little line of love this Christmas Eve, because I hope and pray that you may hear the angels around you singing a very sweet song of peace, and telling you to draw near to the Prince of Peace in the manger, that you may with your whole soul be able to draw nearer to the Prince of Peace in His glory, Who is day by day drawing you nearer to Himself. Christmas follows Christmas till we return to the Child-life again, of feebleness and dependence and need of care, that warns us of our coming nearer to our FATHER’S Home through Him Who made Himself a child for us. No doubt many things, and many loves bind us to earth, but there are inward attractions and secret longings for the vision of GOD that unbind these ties, and make us welcome the signals that the land of rest is not very far off. May you be able to look into it this Christmas with a sweet sense of peace. Gather up your whole life before GOD with all that it shows you of sin or carelessness, or unfulfilled response to Divine grace. Sorrow over it as you will, but let your sorrow be

turned into joy, as you welcome your SAVIOUR, and cast yourself in loving trust and confidence into the arms of His love. GOD bless you with the rich blessing of His everlasting peace.

“Ever your loving friend,

“&c., &c.

“*Christmas Eve.*”

These letters are but parts of a correspondence which was continued until her resignation, and then, having been suspended for a time, was afterwards resumed during the last years of her growing infirmity.

The following letter is in some respects of an unique character: it was written to a near relation of one of the Sisters, with whom Mother Harriet had had a few passing conversations, during which he had been greatly struck with her “large-heartedness, and especially her cordial respect for every expression of a thought and desire for GOD’s glory, though very far from harmonising with her own school of thought.” The letter was written when she had heard that Sir James Paget had decided, that this gentleman had “a serious disease which must take its course.”

“*House of Mercy, Clewer.*

“MY DEAR MR. —, Sister — has told me how consciously you were passing under GOD’s Hand, and life is assuming for you a different aspect, and new feelings of responsibility rise up before you. It is no longer now how best to do the day’s work, but how best to live the day’s life, with all its burden of suffering and weakness, to GOD’s glory.

“This is a question which in one form or other of suffer-

ing GOD brings face to face with some souls. Earth's life, as it has been, in one moment drops from us, and we stand before GOD with one absorbing thought, How best to live for GOD?

"I think the answer is, to live *in* GOD as much as we can, to enter into the deep solitude and silence and stillness of a life in GOD. In Him alone we feel we have strength to go through what He calls us to bear,—and we must open up our being to enter in faith into His life, and let Him reveal His life in us.

"Our great work when His call comes, is to have faith to open the door of our being and let GOD in, GOD in the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity—the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST forming the CHRIST-life in us, and the FATHER coming to make His abode. This Life is fed in us by Sacraments, by communing with GOD in the wilderness, by lights coming direct from GOD or through His word.

"It is often too much for us in the wear and tear of daily life to rise up to the contemplation of our real greatness in GOD, but I feel sure now the more you muse on it, and ponder and pray, you will feel this, and that not any special acts of your own, are the true way to accomplish your desire to live for GOD.

"You will have much to test you, much to purge out the old leaven of our nature, that the CHRIST-life may be made manifest in you. And I read now in all the drawings of GOD leading you to draw others to dedicate their lives to Him, how He has been secretly drawing you on to lead you to the consecration of yourself in the higher life of union,—union with the sufferings of JESUS, with His loneliness, with His solitude with GOD, His Patience, His Love.

"I have dwelt on solitude, because I think this is one special form in which your illness will test you,—there are deep solitudes in our being into which no one can enter, into which we care not for any to enter. In a busy working Community life of duty we know nothing of these solitudes, or if we catch a glimpse of them we soon fill them up with work or distractions. But now each week will withdraw you more from the outer.

"You know how keenly —— feels for and with you, by the strength of the love that has bound your strong natures to each other. She will go to see you from time to time. But nothing any one can do can fill the solitude of your being, but GOD. Therefore I try to give you courage to strive to gain the childlike simplicity of a little child, that as a child you may hide yourself in GOD. I write from the depths of experience of a soul who has long passed under God's Hand, and who can tell the never-failing love there is in the touch of that Hand.

"Yours very sincerely,

"And with truest sympathy,

"H. MONSELL.

"Oct. 24, 1874."

These words were not written in vain. Her correspondent, inclosing this letter to the author, says: "The thought of no longer how best to do the day's work, but how best to live the day's life, has been very often in my mind, and I trust it may also be of value to others."

Very much of Mother Harriet's correspondence in the earlier period of her life at Clewer, was necessarily taken up with procuring help for the work. Afterwards as Sisters were drawn to offer themselves, there was the necessity of

considering the several cases, and to enter into the difficulties which might stand in the way of their coming.

The spirit in which Mother Harriet dealt with such cases requires to be noted. The two following letters are to a friend whom she had asked to come, but who was hindered, the first of the two in the early days of the House of Mercy work, when the need of help was greatest.

“MY DEAR —, After you left me yesterday I began to fear, lest in my desire to have your assistance at any time you could give it, I had not been sufficiently considerate of your home claims, and I thought how unreasonable your sister would consider my taking you away from her. So I must write to explain that I do not mean to be selfish. I shall indeed be most thankful for any assistance you can give me, and I should much like you to be with us for a time, that we may have your more entire sympathy in our work, and that you may more fully enter into what it is. But at the same time I know the home ties and home duties stand far beyond all others, and it is only when God seems to make one's way plain, and place one in a work of the kind, that one can feel entire confidence that one is in the right path. If you come to us at this time I shall feel you are a messenger sent from Him, having prayed for help, and feeling full assurance that He would put it into the heart of some one of His servants to come and help just now when we want help.”

This second letter was written somewhat later :

“MY DEAR —, I am very sorry you cannot come to us, I should have liked to have you so much, and I know

these little visits from time to time are a pleasure to yourself,—but just so far as you feel them a help and blessing to yourself, so you may be assured that when you resign them to the will of others, or because GOD shows you the path of duty lies elsewhere, so will He be with you teaching you and drawing you nearer and nearer to Himself, though you may not be able to enjoy such sensible communion with Him, which He seems so graciously to give here for one's support and comfort in this work, and you have always a share in our prayers."

The extracts which follow are from letters written to one who had greatly desired to become a Sister, but was hindered from ever accomplishing the desire in consequence of ill health.

The circumstances which led Mother Harriet to write with the view of comforting her in her disappointment, and helping her in the discharge of the duties open to her in the world, are best given in her correspondent's own words, addressed to the author :

"My real intimate friendship with dear Mother Harriet only began when ——, who had been my most kind friend, died, though I had known of her all my life, as she was an old friend of my mother's. What her help and influence have been in my life no one fully knows but GOD ; and to Him I constantly offer up my thanks for what I feel is one of the greatest blessings I ever had. To explain fully what some things in her letters to me mean, I should tell you that for the last twenty years, that is since I was quite a little child, the one aim and hope of my life has been that I might offer myself wholly to GOD in the Religious Life.

In these many years there have been many difficulties and doubts to obscure this aim ; and nothing has so helped me to keep true to it as Mother Harriet's help and sympathy. It has not pleased GOD as yet to allow the accomplishment of this desire. Some years ago I had a long illness, and I have never been really well or strong since. In the heart-sickness that often comes over me at the seemingly hopeless deferment of my heart's desire, it is one of my greatest comforts to hope that I am learning the lesson of perfect self-surrender to GOD's will, which Mother Harriet helped me so much to long and strive for. If any of her written words to me might help others in like difficulties I shall be so very glad."

The following are the letters referred to :

"MY DEAR —, I am very glad that you should write to me. I feel you a sacred trust left to me by —. He was very anxious about your young life, and knew that it must pass through sundry chastenings and trials ere it could be really braced up to the height of your desire and aims ; for it is one thing for the soul to grasp at a vision of what GOD would draw it on to, another to attain to that which the soul has grasped ; and the long, weary, plodding steps day by day, and the frequent conquests of self, are very difficult, and the path cannot well be trod alone, because it is one of difficulty and loneliness.

"So, as for the time being GOD seems to trust you to my guiding, do not fear to lean as you will. . . . [here follows advice as to parish work.] All this, dear child, will help to test the reality of what you would give to GOD. It is one thing to work for one's own pleasure, and the reward it brings ; more, to walk along the clear path of duty and for

GOD alone. Thank Him that He sends the testing in your young days. He is just saying to you, 'Can you?' but when we say, 'we are able,' He takes us at our word, and our whole future life is a being upheld by His love along the path we have chosen. But remember it is along the way of the Cross, for that was the cup He drank of. There is nothing like really counting the cost before one begins to build one's tower, then afterwards, though one knows it is difficult to build it from various causes, there is no mis-giving.

"Now, you know —— wished you to take a time before you came in your own mind to any final decision about your life. I advise it too. Take the time he fixed for you, if he did fix any: if not, take till S. Andrew's Day, 18—, and let all you pass through in this year be a steady testing of the truth of the way in which you can work for GOD alone. . . .

"Remember, GOD always works very slowly and very surely; the bud is formed slowly; opens slowly. We must work as GOD works, not with the great strides self-love would like to work with."

The following was in answer to a letter telling Mother Harriet that she had made her first confession.

"MY DEAR ——, Your letter gave me great pleasure. I was so glad you should get the help at the time you felt the pressing need. GOD so truly supplies all our needs, and He will make your way plain in the future. I do hope you will be very careful of your health, and I think probably, as your inward life gets more restful, you will find that restrained work is more valuable, and accomplishes more

than when we let the energies of self outrun our powers. God bless you.

“Ever yours very affectionately,
“&c., &c.”

Then followed another letter when she heard of the growing weakness which hindered any active service :

“MY DEAR —, I was very glad to get your letter. I always feel as if you were a child commended to me by —, and I can fully enter into your trial in feeling the energies of work falling from you. It so happens that I have just this day seen a book that I think will help you to understand God’s way of working with us, and how His purposes are being carried out in ways that seem to us as failure. It is called, ‘On the HOLY SPIRIT,’ by Bishop Webb. I think if you get this book, which is not expensive, and read it carefully, it will answer a good deal that is stirring in your own heart.”

Nothing could exceed the tenderness of sympathy that would be elicited from Mother Harriet by any real sorrow. The following short notes were addressed to a relation in an advanced state of serious illness. They were written in her own latter days of extreme weakness :

“MY VERY DEAR ONE, — tells me that she has seen you, and that you are very weak, but that you love my little notes, so I must send you a bright little line to-day. I love to think of you standing on the threshold of the land of rest ; the Home we love and long for. When you get there, if you meet my loved one, you will know what to tell him of me. For twenty years that we have stood, one on

this side and one on that side of the veil, we have never been parted ; and now the meeting time must be getting near, though I know that he loves that I should stay here GOD's time to do His work.

"GOD bless you, dear. Keep your faith very steadfast, and your hope very bright, and your love ever resting on Him Who is Love ; then you need not fear to pass through the dark valley alone with your GOD.

"Ever your loving friend,

"H. MONSELL."

Again to the same :

"MY DEAR, DEAR —, So glad that I saw you, and that you had that good sleep after. I do trust I may some day, after the wedding, see you again. Keep very still and calm in GOD, trusting with your whole heart in His love, and He will receive His child in His own good time, all washed and made holy in the Blood of JESUS ; but we must trust His love, and as we trust, we are sure to advance in holiness. We bring our daily life into the Presence of GOD, and though it shows us all its defects, it also brings healing to them, and clothes us with humility, as a garment of holiness.

"Thanks, dear, for the cheque. It will help us on our way. I hope to send back —, none the worse for being here. GOD bless you all, and make this marriage a source of great blessing to all.

"Ever your loving friend,

"H. MONSELL."

Once more to the same :

"I am so glad to hear that you have had a visit from —. It is just what would help and comfort you ; some

one you could speak to, and no doubt he has helped you on your way upwards. I hope you begin to love the land beyond very much. I know there is the dark river and the separation from earth's loved ones, but there is the beautiful land beyond, and the fulness of the love of JESUS, and the vision of GOD; and the old self all left behind, and the new self that has put on CHRIST. GOD bless you, dear. I am so glad you keep out of the cold, and make less bodily exertion. It does not make you feel your strength so dragged as when you are making efforts.

“Ever your loving friend,

“H. M.”

We may see the depths out of which Mother Harriet's loving tenderness welled forth so tenderly, in the following words addressed to a friend who had been disappointed by experiencing coldness when she had looked for sympathy.

“I must send you a true bit of sympathy on the coldness you speak of,—but I am sure all this comes from GOD, Who will purify the offering till it is emptied of all human satisfaction. Our LORD with His human tenderness enters into all the little shades of suffering, and it is because good people do not enter into the deep, tender beauty of our LORD's life, they fail to reproduce it when they come into contact with others.”

The friend to whom these words were written, and who knew the writer well, thus describes her own impression as to the influence exercised upon herself by her intercourse with Mother Harriet.

“She was not content with broken virtues, she went straight to the great Source and imbibed the Water of Life

freely ; and so, no matter where she touched humanity, a ray of perfect sympathy shone from Him through her ; and so, as it always seemed to me, she attracted souls to God rather than to herself.

"One of her little rules for me was 'Try to do little things for God's glory without letting any one know.'

"I have read of some one, who, when she went to the Altar to pray, prayed aloud ; some one else followed and wrote down her prayers. When Mother went she rose in the deep stillness of the night, and crept alone to the Altar, and remaining there poured out her tried soul to God. One day when she was trying to help me I gained this knowledge. One could almost say of her, not only 'looking unto JESUS,' but 'looking *from* JESUS.' She saw all life from such a grand standpoint. Obstacles (so called) she did *not* see. 'Don't look aside,' she used to say, 'look upwards, and in His light you will see light.'"

The same friend was greatly struck by the sympathy expressed by Mother Harriet towards members of another Community.

"One great feature in Mother Harriet's life was her deep sympathy with any work for God irrespective of its being carried out according to her own views, and she showed this in no way more beautifully than in her constant love and desire to help other Communities. Writing to the foundress of another Community, she says :

"'I am always thankful if we can by any means draw closer the links of unity. Strange that our variations of thought should ever cause difficulties to those who love JESUS and work for Him. If we each could chase the self out of us, we soon should find the points of har-

mony, not of discord ; our fingers would touch them invisibly.' ”

This friend continues :

“ Often have I seen the Mother attracting to her side some Sister of a younger Community than her own, who listened to her loving counsels ; her clear-sightedness into character enabling her to discover at once just what counsel was needed, and her full heart of love making it not only acceptable but very sweet.”

It is not of course easy to convey an idea of personal intercourse, but one instance may be given of the kind of power wont to be felt by visitors drawn to the House of Mercy by the desire of obtaining Mother Harriet's help. The following account is given in the words of a friend of the person referred to.

“ One great secret of her marvellous power of helping others, lay in her willingness to share her own life and experience with them, thus placing herself *en rapport* with them, and enabling them to feel that she too had known something of what they were going through.

“ ‘ We must speak of ourselves, if we want to help others,’ she once said ; ‘ people shrink from doing this, but they should not do so too much. Our experience has been given us for others, not for ourselves alone.’ ”

“ Some years ago one who was of a proud reserved nature, and who was becoming hardened under a great sorrow, was induced to go to Mrs. Monsell by a friend, who hoped that her words might bring peace and comfort to a sorrowful heart.

“ ‘ My poor child,’ said the Mother as soon as they were alone, ‘ you are in great trouble,—I know just what you are feeling, and I know well what it was to feel hard and

rebellious when my husband was taken from me. Sit down, and I will tell you all about it.'

" 'I could not have spoken of my grief,' said the visitor afterwards, 'only she told me all about herself and her own sorrow, and then I felt she understood, and so I told her all, and she comforted me as no one else has ever done.'

"Sister Dora once said, that when we wish to help others, we must be signposts, pointing the way to GOD, and not standing in the way ourselves. This was Mrs. Monsell's great aim, not to attach her friends to herself only in the strong ties of personal love, but to lead them on to rest in the love of the Highest. GOD must be all in all,' she would say, 'let nothing short of that satisfy you.'"

The following extracts from letters to an intimate friend, which, while answering her questions, express her own opinions on some important practical questions, seem suitable to form the close of this chapter.

The first touches on the question of spiritual direction; the second is a reply to an inquiry as to the use of certain books that had been recommended; the third is on Spiritual Communion; and the fourth on quietness amidst divisions of opinion.

I.

"In these days when we have such varied shades of teaching, I think we are peculiarly called to act up to the light of our own conscience, and not beyond it. . . . As to any amount of rule or guidance, making us not feel life to be a struggle, and at times a very severe one, I do not believe it will, and I think the true rest will be found in looking out of ourselves, and within only so much as leads

us to a real, earnest watchfulness against sin. You know, dear, how strongly I feel individual responsibility. After all we live alone the life hid with CHRIST in GOD ; we die alone ; and we answer at the judgment-seat of CHRIST alone ; and we are as much the objects of CHRIST's tender love, as if we alone were the objects of His care. And all by the way, be it Sacraments, or earthly guides, or Holy Scripture, or the Church, are but helps through which and by which we reach CHRIST, 'our Way, our Truth, our Life.'"

2.

"I cannot think it desirable to try to like what does not approve itself to one's own mind. GOD will lead us into the knowledge of all truth in the doing of His will, and I should fear to force one's mind. Individual responsibility, and the teaching that GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT vouchsafes to each soul, seem to me such blessed truths, so full of support and comfort, that I would be still and wait, and not think, because others like certain food, it must be good for oneself."

3.

"About Spiritual Communion I have I am sure the same difficulties you have, that is to say, I fancy some people mean much more by it than I can understand. To me it is an act of union with our Blessed LORD, a seeking to be fed with His precious Body and Blood, to be made one with Him, and through Him with all the blessed Saints departed, that thereby one may grow more and more into the Body of CHRIST. I do not know that I could feel this union increased by thinking that at that moment the Holy Communion was being celebrated at a distance.

"That the Church in this country has been stunted and starved in its growth from the want of that precious Food

which our LORD vouchsafed to give us for its support, I suppose we all feel; and the longings for increased life by the partaking of this precious Food, and definite acts expressive of this longing as the nourishment of our souls, will bring to us, we may humbly trust, the blessings of which we should be partakers, if we might more frequently feed on that precious Food in actual Communion."

4.

"I doubt not, dear friend, as time passes on, and if I had to listen to the voice of the world, I should feel as deeply tired as you do with all the controversies that beset us. But GOD having sent me other sorrow, and called me apart to minister to the sorrows of others, has rather enabled me to rejoice in all the rest and blessedness that can be found in our Church, than to be troubled with its divisions."

Chapter the Twelfth.

MOTHER HARRIET'S RESIGNATION OF HER OFFICE.

*" Lord, I had planned to do Thee service true,
To be more humbly watchful unto prayer,
More faithful in obedience to Thy word,
More bent to put away all earthly care.*

*" I thought of sad hearts comforted and healed,
Of wanderers turned into the pleasant way,
Of little ones preserved from sinful snare,
Of dark homes brightened with a heavenly ray ;*

*" Of time all consecrated to Thy will,
Of strength spent gladly for Thee day by day ;
When suddenly the heavenly mandate came,
That I should give it all, at once, away."*

CAROLINE NOEL'S "*Name of Jesus,*" &c.

FOR two or three years before there came the necessity for the resignation of her office, Mother Harriet's strength had very visibly declined. She had become less and less able to bear the constant calls of the daily routine of work. When visiting Branch Houses, the effort was such that she was unable to enter into business matters if they involved the least anxiety, and the Sisters felt obliged to spare her as far as possible, ceasing to bring before her anything except what required immediate settlement.

It was not however until the summer of 1875 that the possibility of the entire failing of her health became matter of real alarm. In the August of that year she went to Whitby in hopes that the bracing air might invigorate her weakened frame. The author of this memoir was also staying there at the time, and her rapid decline caused him the greatest anxiety. He left to make a fortnight's tour in Yorkshire before returning to Clewer, while Mother Harriet remained, enjoying the rest, and able to take short drives. She wrote to him cheerfully of having had "a delightful drive to the Light-houses;" of having "seen a lovely subject for a sketch, with a windmill;" and again, of "going to the Mulgrave Woods." And then came a letter marked "private," which seemed to extinguish at once the lingering hope of her rallying.

"I fortunately sent for the Doctor¹ before taking the warm baths. He says he thinks they would be very dangerous for me. He examined my heart very carefully, and said it was a grave case. He seems clever, and is pleasant and straightforward. He at once felt the swelling in the legs must come from a decided cause.

"I thought I had better see him to-day, and know the exact truth. It is degeneracy of the heart,—just what I nursed William in at Bangor, so I know it all. I asked about going home, as I did not wish to be caught as we were in lodgings. But he thinks that I may with care have a continued life, and this air is very good for my general health, but the medicine that will relieve the symptoms ought to be watched. He says that I cannot really recover ;

¹ Dr. Meade, of Whitby.

it will go on and on, and I must be relieved from work and anxiety.

“So I shall just stay on here. Tell some few. Let the Sisters say to all that I am not really better, but there is no use speculating about what is in GOD’S Hands. This will enable you to see your path more clearly. I am so thankful to have seen you here, and trust GOD will work out all the future to His glory. I am thankful for what He has given me to do; thankful now to lay down my staff.”

She had often said that her family was not usually long-lived; that she had reached the age at which other members of it had been taken.

Very shortly after the last letter there came another yet more decisive.

“Whitby, Sept. 18, 1875.

“You will have got my letter on reaching home, and I have got your interesting account of your travels from York. I am so glad you made the tour.

“And now about myself, I must tell you exactly the doctor’s opinion; and he is a man in all ways to inspire confidence. He has now seen me very carefully every day for a week, while I have taken the medicines he and Mr. Turner at Cliffe both prescribed for me, but which needed to be taken under medical care.”

Then after speaking of the special symptoms on which the doctor’s opinion was founded, the letter goes on to say:

“This morning I spoke to him again, and it is his decided opinion that I ought to resign the Superior’s office. He says I can take an interest in all, for he is most anxious not to make me into an invalid, but all pressure should be

taken off. I think if you talked with him five minutes you would see he is right. He has no doubt it is better for me to say a full and decided say about it, and it would give the best hope of a prolonged life of enjoyment and usefulness.

"I know you have felt both for myself and the work, that it is better so, when nothing is to be gained by lingering on an inefficient Superior.

"I know the Sisters will feel it deeply, and for their sakes it costs me a great deal to write this letter. But I have full confidence in them that they will accept my resignation, as God's will for me and for them, and only seek to be guided to know what is His will for the future. I shall most thankfully exchange my cross¹ for that of whichever of my precious children is chosen to bear the burden. I promise that she shall find no difficulty in her work from having me at her side.

"And now I shall say no more, but send the tenderest love to you, and all my dear, dear children. God bless and guide you all.

"HARRIET, Sup^{or} C. S. J. B."

About the same time she wrote to a dear friend already referred to, with whom a constant correspondence had been kept up.

"MY DEAREST —, I only write you a short note, but you must not hear from others that this body you have so

¹ The cross which Mother Harriet wore, was made specially for her from a gold nugget which her brother, William Smith O'Brien, brought from Australia, and gave to her. She gave it on her resignation to the Community to be worn by her successors in the Superior's office.

often and so tenderly cared for is striking work, and though it may travel on in cotton for some time longer it will not rise up into health. As yet, I go about freely, and sketch with as much vigour as ever, but I walk very little, am very breathless, and my feet, if not kept up, swell much.

“The last fortnight I seem to have gone down rapidly.”

Then after speaking of the grave symptoms the letter adds :

“He (the doctor) said he saw I wished to know all. It was that I could never get better; with great care I might enjoy a prolonged life, but it might be cut short by anything.

“You know, dear, you have but one thing to do, to give thanks, and pray that I may glorify GOD; please, dear, for the moment, say to all I am no better for the rest, but as yet only to —— and ——; but I felt you have done too much for me to keep it from you, though I know the pang it will give you. If you tell ——, you must first bind her not to speak of it to any in the family or out of it. I will myself tell those I wish to know. GOD bless you, my dearest friend.

“Ever your loving

“HARRIET.

“*Sept.* 12, 1875.”

There was much anxious deliberation whether it were possible to obviate the necessity of a resignation, by some fresh arrangement which might relieve her of all pressure, while yet not losing the weight of her influence as still being the Superior. But it was felt that there would be the greatest difficulty in carrying out any such plan, while she would be

unavoidably left to bear the ultimate responsibility, though without any sufficient power of interference, and thus, in fact, keep up only under another form the burden of anxiety, which was the very thing to be deprecated.

It was during this interval, in reference to these deliberations, that she thus wrote to the author :

“ *Sept.* 24, 1875.

“ I feel with you all the difficulties of the case because it comes on all rather suddenly, unprepared for a change. I would put myself entirely in yours and the doctor's hands, and do as you think right for the next year, when naturally there must come an election,¹ and we should all see where we were then.

“ If it were quite understood that my own mind was to resign, and put another in full possession of the office, then, whatever you and the Bishop decide to be right for the present growth of the Sisterhood, I would do, for I should feel I was making no precedent of a Superior clinging on, unwilling to resign office, and take the appointed place ; all of which I am most perfectly willing to do.

“ As far as I can judge of myself, I shall for a time at least continue to have a good deal of half-life, but not be equal to any constant, steady pressure.

“ I feel it to be of the greatest importance that the perfect vigour of the government should be sustained ; no room given for the feeling on the part of any Sister, ‘ I do not like to ask this or that,’ for fear of her Superior being over-pressed, and one ought to be able in a mo-

¹ According to the constitution of the Community the Office of Superior is held only for three years, with power of re-election. An election would naturally fall in the November of this same year, 1875.

ment at any point to support, and cheer, and set to rights with one's presence anything that needs adjusting. God has given us all quite too great and important a work for personal considerations on my side to weigh for a moment. But it is a young work; it has stretched wide, and it needs strengthening and working into its central life, and if you think it well, because of experience and testing, to keep me as the pivot round which the machine turns, though you recognise that it is worn into a very fragile state, while you are preparing a new pivot, I am content; but do let it be quite known that I believe our constitution to be perfect, only that it needs a good, firm, enlarged, gentle, yet vigorous prime minister to administer it; and though I fully trust and believe in the life in God of each, and the entire submission under His Hand, yet for the day by day administration of the work the machine is too large not to fly asunder, unless it is compacted round a good central life that holds the whole together and keeps each wheel working in its own groove, but well dependent on the central wheel.

"I feel this is a moment of great anxiety for you all; my heart and prayers are constantly with you, that God may guide all to His glory.

"Ever yours,
"HARRIET, Sup^{or} C. S. J. B."

After much consideration of the many grave interests involved, the decision at last seemed inevitable that Mother Harriet's resignation should be accepted. It was on the author's communicating to her this decision that she then again wrote to him.

"It was a rest to me to get your letter and to feel all is

settled. Day by day GOD will unfold His will. And it is a joy to me to feel how truly the Community responds to GOD's will, for one knows their love, and what it costs them and you too. I know you will help me by your prayers on entering on a new stage of my own life. It is to him that overcometh, the blessings of the intimate life of union are granted, and I feel all the need of watchfulness in a life that must have greater relaxation in it. It may open greater demands on holiness, for between this and the hour of death you know how long I have felt that the testings may be severe. And I think that as far as I can judge there still may be many travelling days, and these will I hope be a strength and blessing to the Sisters.

"Ever earnestly commending myself to your prayers,

"Yours, &c.,

"HARRIET, Sup^r C. S. J. B."

A short extract from a letter written to one of the elder Sisters may be added, as to her state of feeling at this momentous crisis :

"Our times are in GOD's hands. I only ask you to pray that GOD may be glorified in me and in you, and give thanks for the years we have all loved each other so tenderly,—thanks, too, for me, for you know how much of me has lived within the veil ; if I am found ready, the opening of the door will be joy.

"And now, dear, I have told you this, I must tell you one side of me is full of life and enjoyment. This pretty country is a delight to me, I draw with real interest ; the Sisters with me are most dear,—so quiet, wise, and careful. I shall, I trust, ere long be among you, though not for work. I am not up to it."

After this it became a question where within the circle of the Community Mother Harriet might find the rest she so much needed, whether at the House of Mercy, or at S. Andrew's Hospital at Clewer. It was to this she alludes in a letter to the author with a loving greeting for All Saints' Day :

"I must send you a line on this Eve of All Saints, a day which has long drawn us very close to each other, and now more so when we each are drawing nearer to that blessed company, and only desiring to be made meet to be folded in among them. For you, as I feel the rest of having laid down my staff, I feel the tenderest sympathy, for I feel as if I had laid an additional burden upon you, but I trust all will soon get settled, and that things will go on in their quiet course. My one exhortation to the Sisters is not to let the sparkle out of the Community. I love that in a life of sacrifice they should give GOD a joyous service. If GOD spare me to do anything more for Him, I hope to be allowed to live in those two rooms upstairs in the Hospital, and to work a little among the sick children. Sometimes, as yesterday morning, I feel very springy, towards evening I was good for nothing. I feel to live day by day, and say prayers for you all, is all I can do.

"With truest love,

"HARRIET.

"Eve of All Saints."

It will afterwards be seen that the remainder of her life was not destined to be without fruit, but it was to be of a different kind of usefulness from what she had herself sometimes imagined possible. On her return to Clewer it be-

came at once quite clear that she was unable to take any part in the work carried on in any of the Houses, and although rooms had carefully been prepared both at the House of Mercy and at the Hospital, as one or other might seem best, it proved to be impossible for her to remain in either; the stir and movement of the active life round her was too much for her shattered nerves, notwithstanding all that could be devised to shield her from disturbance.

Of her own state of mind at this time on the question of her future, she herself thus writes to one of the Sisters :

“Of myself I have various feelings. This time with the Sisters has shown me that I must not draw too near Clewer till I am stronger, and my own being more still. It is comparatively easy to be quite set aside by illness. But to feel vigorous power at times and yet no definite object, is a trial on one side, and yet on the other my powers are too uncertain, and my sensations too sensitive to see quite my way, so I keep perpetually trying to learn to take no thought for the morrow. I am glad to have tested the effect of coming as it were near Clewer. — quite sees the difference it makes in me. Time will and must do its work, and we shall see what is GOD’s will. It may be that there is really no real reviving life in me, it may be as with —, a prolonged rest may set me up, but then there is the definite heart weakness. So you see, dear, there is room for conflicting thoughts and feelings, if one moves out of ‘Hold thee still in the LORD, and abide patiently in Him;’ and here I do rest and feel how much GOD has to teach one, and means to teach one. How difficult it is to let JESUS really live in one,—really glorify the FATHER as and how He wills in one; and yet, dear, this is the aim of our lives. This is

what we have both pledged ourselves to learn at any cost. A mighty aim must have a mighty learning.

"Now, dear, this is all for yourself alone. You will know how to pray for me as I will for you, and the least said the best. Each day will say its own say, and manifest GOD's will. Let us rest in His love, and learn at Christmas what it is for the GOD-Man to be the Babe of Bethlehem.

"Ever your most loving

"H."

This was written towards the close of the year 1875, when she was passing the winter in a country house with her surviving brother. It was a time of entire restfulness.

The following extract from a letter to a Sister at a distance describes in her own words how this, the first winter after her resignation, was passed :

"While the mighty wave was passing over one's life I did not write : now it has closed over, and the waters are calm, and everybody enters Advent earnestly seeking to put on the garment of light, in the circumstances into which GOD has called them. Of myself what shall I say, but that I strive to live day by day waiting on the Will of GOD. I keep entirely in the house, which is very warm and comfortable, and here, I suppose, I shall stay now for a time. I am certainly better, and feel the great point is to avoid cold, and go quietly on, and see how I am about Easter. Sometimes I think my day's work is not done yet, but we shall see, and, as I say, I live day by day.

"—— celebrates for us at a quarter to nine on Sunday mornings, and I get up first. Other days I breakfast in bed, and get up at ten. I draw a good deal, which you

know is always a resource to me ; read a little, write a little, work ditto ; rest a bit before dinner at half-past seven, and get through the evening till ten or half-past ten, and then Sister —— puts her baby to bed. I keep my fire in all night, and so far am doing well. I am writing very lazily on my knee, lying in an arm-chair, so do not judge of my health by my writing. Luncheon has intervened ; it is strange having to fit oneself into a listless life. Write to me, dear one, one of your own cosy letters, then I shall know what to pray for for you. You are always in my heart and in my prayers.

“Your ever loving

“HARRIET, S. C. S. J. B.

“*Advent Sunday, 1875.*”

On the 9th of February of the following year she writes again as to her own state, and of what after many searchings of heart and much conflict of feeling she had learnt to accept as God's will for her.

“It has been a great rest to me since I made up my mind I should just be such a good quiet little Sister among you all, and not take more than a Sister's interest in all that goes on. It was very difficult to open my hand and let drop all the threads of Superiorship, but I feel much happier since I have done so. And now I hear with interest all that comes to me, but seek to know nothing. I shall be very glad when I can come into Community again, at the same time I feel I must get a quiet rest somewhere. . . . This changeable weather tries me a good deal, and I feel the thaw to-day.

“Ever your very loving

“HARRIET, C. S. J. B.”

Some while later on she wrote again to the same effect, and the bright, humorous tone of the letter shows yet more significantly that much of the conflict of feeling which she had undergone, had passed.

“For myself I have found the rudder of my boat, and committed it into the Hands of One Who will bring me to the haven where I would be. The bark’s name is Silence, its pennant the Name of JESUS, in it sits the old Mother studying the life of S. John Baptist : and her rule is the grand S. John Baptist Collect : she takes in pilgrims, who can truly and faithfully embrace the pilgrim’s motto, which is, ‘To be nothing, to have nothing, to desire nothing but JESUS, and be with Him in the Heavenly Jerusalem.’”

In the summer of 1876, it became necessary to consider where Mother Harriet could best find the quiet rest of which this letter speaks, without separating herself from the Community, while yet unable to reside in any of its Houses. An old friend with whom the Mother had often stayed in past times of rest, and with whom she passed a short time at this crisis, furnishes the following particulars of her then state of health, and of her thoughts as to her future home.

“It was during the early summer of 1876 that we noticed a great change, stealing, as it were, over the dear Mother. It is difficult to express in words the exact nature of this change ; because though always present, it was not always visible. It was as if her strong mental powers were suffering a temporary eclipse. The eclipse past, her powers were as keen as ever, perhaps even more keen because of the irritability of brain which accompanied the eclipse, and which added vividness to all impressions.

“This strange shadow would fall in a moment. In the midst of the most interesting talks, the genial smile would fade, the light appear to dim, and she would say, not once, but again and again ; ‘ Now, dear, you must leave me quite alone for a time.’ A change of thought and occupation, ending, it might be, in a little nap, gave back what for the time seemed to be lost ; the light and smile returned ; the dear Mother was herself again. But we also noticed with deep sorrow that although her mind regained its brightness her body grew more feeble, with a feebleness to which seemed to come no renewal of strength. I had many talks with the Mother about this unsatisfactory state of her health ; and as to what course she ought to take to gain the perfect repose of body and mind which was needful, and was indeed her only chance of future usefulness.

“Many a time we had spoken together of what would be after she had ceased to be the Superior of the Community ; with what joy she would lay down the weight of the responsibility of direction which was outgrowing her enfeebled strength, and take the lower place of obedience ; still living amidst her dear children as one that served where she had only been used to command. But now all these beautiful hopes seemed to fade, and the Mother would say sadly, ‘ I must not stay at Clewer ; my mind would give way under the constant pressure of work in which I could take no part.’ And again, ‘ I must go away for a time, and have entire rest from all great calls.’ Day by day, week by week, this claim of mind and body for perfect rest grew stronger, and the mental irritability increased, and we who looked on and listened, felt at last that nothing could save the Mother but the obtaining of the repose which her ‘earthly tabernacle’ so loudly called for, and it was then that the idea of

‘the Hermitage’ first began to take shape in the Mother’s mind.”

The same writer speaks of the extent of bodily weakness which she witnessed during one of her visits at this time :

“Our old servants all loved her, one of them helped to nurse her in a painful illness, and she tells me of the sweet playfulness with which she greeted her in the morning in spite of her painful, restless night. This playfulness was one of her great attractions; the last time she was here, when she was very feeble, not able to hold anything firmly, she used to call her pocket-handkerchief her ‘grasshopper,’ because it had become a burden.”

“The Hermitage” above spoken of was¹ situated on the Bail at Folkestone, so called when it was decided to take it as Mother Harriet’s place of Retreat. It was admirably suited for the purpose, being scarce two minutes’ walk from the old parish church, and midway between S. Eanswyth’s Mission House and S. Andrew’s Convalescent Hospital, both settlements of the Community. It thus secured to her the quiet she needed, while yet remaining, as she so much desired, in the midst of the Sisters, and able to take advantage of any means open to her of assisting them.

It was a small house, almost a cottage, and at the back, towards the sea, there was a very pleasant garden, with a narrow bit of lawn and a summer-house, running down to and along the edge of the low cliff which overlooks the shore, commanding a view of the Channel, the harbour

¹ The past tense is used, because immediately after Mother Harriet’s death the house was taken down for the enlargement of the Priory, immediately contiguous.

and shipping being full in sight. It was very simply furnished. One who was concerned in her settling in at the Hermitage, says :

"In giving her orders to the upholsterer for the fitting up of the Hermitage, they were of so rough and plain a kind, that he came to me asking me to beg the Mother to allow him to put a bit of carpet and curtains in her own room."

She herself writing to this friend on the projected move, says :

"We have gathered sundry odds and ends here ; so I hope we shall assume a cosy yet a pilgrim aspect at the Hermitage. Your dear letter was a great comfort to me. I must say I rise to the claim of perfect rest with no demands on me, and I believe it will be the most renovating process."

This was written on August 2, 1876.

A few days before, July 28, in expectation of the move, the Mother wrote to the same friend :

"I love to go there with a feeling of dependence, and think how love human and Divine has provided for me a place of rest in the wilderness. And now in quiet I may draw nearer to GOD, and gain some glimpses here of the vision of the glory the soul yearns to attain to."

To a Sister at a distance she wrote in the same strain of enjoyment at the prospect of her being thus settled :

"The Hermitage is lovely, and so peaceful. I sat out in the garden yesterday under the shade of a high wall. I am longing for the Warden to come and celebrate in the Oratory. It is a quiet abode for me in bracing air, and one I shall delight to see you in when you want a few days' refreshment. The house just holds us two"—(a Sister was ap-

pointed to be with her as her companion, and this arrangement continued to the end)—“and there is a guest-chamber. In the garden there is a summer-house where the outer Sisters may come when they like. . . . Be the medium of much love to the Sisters. Tell them how much I like the Hermitage.”

While speaking of this settlement at Folkestone, one cannot but briefly allude to other helps there provided for her, beside the bracing air, the bright sea view, and the proximity of the Sisters working around her. There was an active Church life in the parish with which she was in closest sympathy, and toward which she could often give seasonable assistance. She had a small altar in her home, and could have celebrations of the Blessed Sacrament whenever she desired it. There were many friends and acquaintances residing there, with whom was kept up an intercourse full of mutual interest and delight. She was unable to walk, but whenever she could manage to drive out, there was the carriage of a devoted friend ever ready to take her. Folkestone being so favourite a point for passing to and from the Continent, she was able to catch a sight often of relatives and friends from a distance, whom it would have been difficult otherwise to see. It seemed indeed providentially chosen, to be the resting-place for the last few years of one so helpless and suffering.

Chapter the Thirteenth.

MOTHER HARRIET'S LIFE AT FOLKESTONE.

*"Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?"*

"In Memoriam."

MOTHER Harriet wrote as follows to a common friend in reference to the sore trial that came on James Skinner, when he was compelled by ill health to give up his important work at S. Barnabas', Pimlico.

"The shadow of sickness and sorrow falls blessedly often in GOD's own work, doing more for His glory in the chastened conformity of man's will to GOD's Will, than could be accomplished by the most brilliant active service. Hard lessons to learn are hid in GOD's teaching, but the whole body is being perfected by the siftings and the fire that try each soul, some more, some less, on their journey onward."

She thus expressed in reference to another what she was herself destined to experience, as "the Hand of GOD touched" her, and laid her aside from her work yet more absolutely.

It will have been seen in the course of the last chapter that she did not attain the "quietness" of which its closing passages speak without a struggle. Nor could it well have

been looked for. To one of her ardent temperament, with the habits and uses of a whole life bent on action, with unusually great powers of management, and the pleasure, which she never cared to disclaim, in the exercise of them, with such opportunities of doing GOD service in fostering works she dearly loved, and of which she had been the main-spring and the guide, and when fresh openings were already in view,—the sudden transition to a state of complete inaction, without any hope of resuming any portion of her former work, would hardly fail to cost a severe conflict. Her mind too had retained much of its former vigour when her nervous system had collapsed. Indeed, it was observed, at times during the latter years of her illness, that when her body was at the weakest, her mind became the stronger. She exhibited from the first very earnest efforts in disciplining herself with her simple trust in GOD's overruling Providence, so as to accept cheerfully the new conditions of so changed an existence ; but for a considerable time the distressing strain was felt. It was indeed a very crucifixion of the flesh, a transformation of all her natural instincts, and of the feelings and uses of a long past history, such as she had never experienced in any degree before. But the calmness which after a while possessed her ; the thorough unquestioning surrender of herself ; the acknowledgment of GOD's ordering in love of all things connected with her helplessness, and her many infirmities, with their ceaseless exactions,—this was quite as remarkable as had been her previous energetic activity.

It was a great source of pleasure to Mother Harriet, that the year after she had taken up her abode at the Hermitage, the late Archbishop of Canterbury (her cousin by marriage) paid her a visit, and blessed the House as a House of

Prayer, at the same time giving her a Bible and Prayer Book, in which he wrote as follows :

House of Retreat,
Folkestone.

HARRIET MONSELL,

From A. C. CANTUAR.

August 7, 1876,
Name of JESUS.

“Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON.”—
S. John xiv. 13.

For awhile, after her resignation, Mother Harriet was able occasionally to move from Folkestone, and she stayed for a short time, at intervals, at Clewer, either at the House of Mercy, or at S. Andrew's Hospital. She was also able to attend regularly the early Celebrations at the Parish Church. But her bodily infirmities gradually increased, and after the lapse of about three years she became so feeble as to be unable to move from her chair, or even to turn in her bed without assistance. Latterly she could with difficulty even feed herself. She lived on thus for four years, and during this period, while thus helplessly dependent, her brightness and resignation were touchingly beautiful.

The following account, written by one who from time to time stayed at the Hermitage, conveys the impression given of her state of mind during that time. The letter is addressed to the author.

“I will very gladly give you my recollections of the dear Mother's life at Folkestone, for it is always a pleasure to go back in thought to the time I was permitted to spend

there with her in the Hermitage. No fitter home could have been found for her as a place of rest, than that quiet home on the Bail, with its cheerful little garden running down to the very edge of the cliff, and its most lovely view of the sea; and close to the Church where, until increasing infirmity hindered it, she used to enjoy the early services.

“The House was bright in its surroundings, but its chief brightness was within. It was always a pleasure when word came to us, that the Mother wanted ‘to be taken care of,’ for a time, during the absence of the Sister, her ordinary companion. And a great privilege I thought it to be allowed to take her place then as far as I could. The chief thing that struck me when thus in close contact with the dear Mother, was her wonderful patience in a state of utter helplessness, when one remembered what her life had been, so full of action and untiring energy, and what it must have been to her to sit hour after hour not able even to stir in her chair, and far less move from it without help. Never once in all the months I spent with her did I ever hear a word that breathed of impatience. There were many little playful allusions to her helplessness, but never a word of regret that she could not do more, or work any longer for GOD, nor even apologies for constantly having to give trouble, or being a burden, which one so often hears elsewhere. Her entire simplicity and acceptance of His will descended to the smallest details of her daily life.

“Then her calmness was another thing that struck one, calmness of mind under great physical nervousness. The two did not seem to get mixed together as in so many invalids, when irritability of nerve and irritability of temper are so hard to disentangle and to deal with.

“Unable to write herself (for the feebleness of her hands that used to write so freely and so well made even the necessary signing of her name a difficult task) she dictated with the greatest clearness and calmness, so that it was very easy to write letters for her, and scarcely a day passed without her dictating many, for she kept up her keen interest in all the work of the Community both far and near, and all her family ties. In all these letters it was wonderful how self was left out. She rarely mentioned herself or her state of health, but threw herself warmly into the interests of those dear ones she wrote to. She kept up her interest also in all the passing events of the day, liking to read the papers each morning for a little while,¹ and using the knowledge thus obtained by remembering the various needs of those she read of, in her prayers. In fact her quiet life was a life of prayer and intercession. She had different days of special remembrance of those whose needs she had at heart, but I think she was almost always praying and holding communion with God, and this gave her the influence she had when in intercourse with others. She was always willing to see friends when able, though she could not bear many at one time, or indeed any one for long together, but those who were privileged to come near her will not soon forget their visit to that bright little room, nor how often they felt strengthened and helped by a very few words from ‘the Mother.’

“Her wisdom often struck me when hearing her give

¹ She had always kept up a keen, warm interest in public affairs. They had been familiar to her from childhood's days in her Dromoland home. Often even in busiest times she would take off her attention to give out her mind in brief, racy expressions on passing events, and always with a large and hopeful thought.

little bits of advice to one or another, and her quickness in seeing into their special needs, saying just the right thing to each. It might be only a bright cheering word given with a playful look, but whatever it was, her words could not soon be forgotten by those who heard them.

“Her various pets were a rest and an amusement to her during the long days when she sat still and could do nothing; and her room was bright with flowers, mostly the gifts of loving friends. Her sight and hearing were wonderfully good; and she was quick to detect a mistake in an Office, or a change in another’s countenance, or even in their dress. She gave out sympathy in little things as well as in great, in joy quite as much as in sorrow, and so every one came to her to claim it. Reading, for which during the years of her active life she had had but little time, was a pleasure to her now, so far as she was equal to it. With her usual quickness she grasped the drift of a book, and after a glance at its pages said at once whether she would go on with it or not. One could not be with her and not learn something, and in the quiet restfulness of those days of helplessness the real greatness of her character seemed to come out more than ever before.”

The ‘pets’ spoken of in this account formed a new feature in Mother Harriet’s surroundings. In her working days she had been strong in denouncing the indulgence, as unbefitting a Sister’s life, and lowering its energies. A Sister who remembers her once dealing with such a tendency in herself in former days, was deeply struck with the apology she made for having yielded to this natural pleasure in the days of her infirmity. Alluding to the past occurrence, when she had shown in Mother Harriet’s presence a special fondness for animals, the Sister says: “The strength and

energy of her own spirit acted on mine in a way that often surprised me, and though my love for animals remained, I have had no pets since that day. In later years I have been touched by the humility with which she excused herself to me for the dogs and birds she had collected about her—that “she could not move about, or use her hands to draw or work, that she grew weary of always reading, and needed something light and trifling for recreation, and these creatures filled up just the want of something to take off her thoughts.”

Another picture is given by one who often sought counsel of Mother Harriet at that time, and loved to record her sayings.

“To visit her in her quiet little room and to hear her accustomed words, ‘Now sit down, and tell me all about yourself;’ to lay before her the cares and difficulties weighing upon one; to listen to her words of counsel and help, spoken with such a full understanding of one’s needs,—no one who has experienced this can ever forget it; and then, when this was ended, and she had given all the special advice that was wanted, she would go on to speak of other subjects in a wider form, showing how the discipline of trial and sorrow is needed to bring the soul nearer to GOD, and to teach more and more His love and power. ‘I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen,’ was the impression left by her words, for to her the love of GOD and the blessedness of a life devoted to Him, and the nearness of the unseen world, were all tangible realities; strong facts as great and greater than those with which she had come in contact in the outward life.

“‘It is good for us to be here,’ was the involuntary feeling of all who were admitted to the little sanctuary of her

room ; for the cares of life were shut out for a time, and one seemed able to live above them all in the atmosphere of peace and love which surrounded her. 'And now, my child, good-bye, and may God bless and help you in all your ways,' she would say, as she bade me farewell."

The following are extracts from letters written from her Folkestone home while she was still able to write a little. They are quoted here because they speak of her way of employing herself, and of the interests which still possessed her mind.

"I must write you a line before Lent, for I mean to enjoy as much freedom as I then can from the pen. I am keeping as well as a decidedly delicate body can, and hope in May to be at Clewer for a bit.

"I draw, and I read, and find plenty to interest me. My life here is so quiet and same like, there is nothing new to tell. All you tell me interests me. Be sure you have a good Lent. Love to ——."

The second extract refers to one of the pets, to which allusion was made previously.

"Before Advent comes I must send you a line to thank you for your letter, which interested me very much. I am very sorry to hear of ——'s heart, and hope she will really take care. I find it makes the greatest difference keeping it warm, and after all if one realises the need of care and adjusts one's life accordingly, one can get on very happily. I have got a sweet little Poll to enliven my old age. We make him 'hop up there,' and 'go home,' and be very obedient. Seeing he is a bird of character and very audacious, he has nearly as difficult 'dispositions' as some of my friends have, and I shall evolve a theory that there is a great

affinity between parrot nature and human nature. I am glad you have got a nice field of work, which will calm your mind under all emergencies. Don't be too conceited about it, but take advice when you have made your design. As to your logic, don't come to hard conclusions ; that is all I have to say, for I hold that the 'law of love' is greater than the 'law of logic,' though I dare say, rightly understood, they are not antagonistic to each other.

"Ever yours very lovingly,

"H. MONSELL.

"What is —— going to do while you are studying logic ? Has she any work in hand to improve her mind ?"

With the Sisters she was in constant communication, noting lovingly with all her former interest the movements that took place among them. Thus to one starting for America she thus writes :

"This evening's post must bear you my love and blessing, lest if I delay before midday post, you are off. Yet I think we may meet at the Altar Friday morning. The sea is glassy still, and how I shall watch it from my window as it bears you away on your venture of faith. You must, dear, take great care while the heat lasts ; really give yourself to quiet and rest the middle of the day. Go slow at first, it will carry you on further in the end. How I should like to fold my large motherly arms round you and the other dear Sisters, as you step over the threshold of the dear Mother House, and go out alone with God—a most blessed 'alone,' when we can let all the entanglements of earth drop off from us, and only take them all up in God at their true value, but that value is very great. Every loved

object in GOD is radiant with a glory of its own. The hidden life is no stamping out feelings and affections, and all the sweet illusions of love ; it is giving them their true value, and harmony, and balance in the framework of the Divine Life, so do not fear to cherish them, while you lay them all at the feet of JESUS. And now, my precious child, I commend you to GOD and His safe keeping.

“Your loving old Mother,

“H.”

And to the same Sister, after her arrival in America, she thus writes again :

“I got your letter just as your Retreat began. It is so blessed for us all to be with you in spirit. We all feel so near. The novena, the Retreat, and the work, and the life bridge over the wild roaring sea that rages between us. I do well see what GOD is doing with you. He first gave you the desire, then He points out the way ; but experience has to make it our own to be drawn through the close personal struggle and personal union into the oneness of the transformed life.”

Her heart turned always very fondly to watch the growth of the Community in America, and to the Sister who had the charge of the work there she sent enclosed in the above letter a few lines of love and blessing :

“I think of you, dear child, as like my white hen and all her chickens, a nursing Mother in the kingdom of GOD. May He give you largely the gift of wisdom, of love, and of patience. I will only send you this wee line of love. You will feel the Hermitage very close to New York, just

over the sea, and the waves bringing loving thoughts between us at all hours day and night.

“Ever your loving Mother,

“HARRIET, C. S. J. B.”

A dear friend who from time to time stayed with Mother Harriet, speaks of her gradual decline, giving dates, which enhance the interest of her report :

“I was with her in June, 1879, and she was then able to drive out, and could walk with help into the garden. She told me that on Easter Day she had been well enough to go to the Celebration at the Parish Church, but she did not think she could ever do it again. While kneeling at the Altar she had been frightened at her own helplessness, and was obliged to catch hold of a man's arm, and ask him to help her back to her place. She had not then begun to have Celebrations regularly in her own home, but I think she never made her Communion in church after that Easter.

“I was with her in October, 1880, just as Sister Ethel's illness began. She was much more feeble then, and had to keep upon one floor. I was with her again the following autumn, just after Sister Ethel's death. She was not much altered in bodily power, but more depressed than I had ever seen her. I was with her again in November, 1882 ; she was then very quietly happy and content, but much more feeble in body. She could not at that time bear reading aloud for any length of time, but much enjoyed a little poetry. She asked me to read her some of her old favourites, Gray's *Elegy* in particular. (She had always taken great delight in poetry, and this continued to the end.)

“When I went away I said something of my grief at seeing her so increasingly feeble : she said, ‘I will go on,

dear, no doubt, if life goes on.' I said, 'I could not bear to think so.' She said, 'Ah, my dear, when one gives up one's life, one is apt to be taken at one's word.' These were almost her last words to me."

During these last years it was most touching to witness the working of her mind, still so vigorous and so playful, though imprisoned in a body so helpless, often so suffering, and all the while making amusement for herself out of the simplest things, clothing them with her own large and fruitful ideas. She was delighted at any opportunity of conversing with any person of intelligence, with a joyous laugh and kindling eye catching at any opening for humorous thought, whilst yet it was ever felt that there lay behind some deep earnest purpose. There was a wonderful unity in these rapid transitions from the grave to the gay, the same buoyant spirit linking both together now as of old time, when it animated and invigorated her working powers. The Sister who was constantly with her during the last year and more, after Sister Ethel's death, says, "At the same time that she was so constantly giving herself out for deep and difficult questions of life in its varied forms, her sympathy, and bright, joyous, almost child-like keenness of interest were perpetually pouring sunshine into the details of every life that came across her. She managed to get interest and pleasure out of everything. Every minutest detail of what went on in her little household was at her wish made known to her, and all was a joy to her. 'Search England through,' she would say, 'and you could not find a nicer, cosier little home than we have.' 'It seems made for me, and we are such a happy household.' The sunny southern aspect of the sitting-room, the view of the sea, of the cliffs, of the vessels passing up and down the channel, her little garden,

the church bells, her pets, her flowers, all were unfailing sources of pleasure. 'I do not believe,' she would say to her doctor¹ (who, through his unceasing care and kindness during the many years of his watchful attendance, had become a personal friend), 'you have any patient who is more uncomfortable in body than I am, but it is all outside, all nerves, and I am as bright and cheerful and happy an old woman as any in Folkestone;' or, leaving her symptoms and her sufferings on one side, she would plunge into all the topics of the day, and beguile the busy doctor with some keen argument and discussion, full of quick repartee and grasp of the subject in hand. And then the next minute after he had gone she would perhaps call her little pet dog, 'Gyp,' or allow her white cockatoo, 'Charlie,' to climb up her knee, and give them a droll, quaint *rechauffé* of her views on some political or literary subject, amusing herself with their funny ways and tricks, with the same zest and life as she had just before put into discussing deep subjects that were very near her heart. Sunshine and activity seemed the atmosphere that surrounded her, in spite of her complete inability even to change her position in her chair without help. When the day was hopelessly dull and foggy, 'Let us go,' she would say, 'and spend the day in Italy.' And she could recall at will the places which she had visited abroad, and this so vividly, that 'it gave,' she would say, 'as much pleasure as if she had been able to go there again in reality.'

"Children and their joys and pleasures were as great an interest and delight to her during these later, as in her earlier days. Her grand-nephews, some of whom were at school at Folkestone, used to say, 'Aunt Harriet always

¹ Dr. Bowles, of Folkestone.

knows what a fellow wants, and gets it for him.' She was with children as a child, and entered into all their young life with the zest of a young person. Every Sunday they would scamper in to pay her a visit after morning service, and all their school interests, work, companions, games, &c., were poured into her ears. With the high spirits of boyhood she had a most keen sympathy. 'They will need all their spirits by-and-by,' she would say, 'how should I have got through life without mine?'

"Idleness or want of purpose in life was the side of character she had no patience with. 'Find her something to do; we must 'harish' her into some definite work,' she would say, if she happened to come across any girl who seemed to have no fixed purpose for employing her time, and often she would herself suggest something to do, and insist upon its being done."

It cannot be said that Mother Harriet's work ceased during all this period. More especially to the Sisters at work around her she was the constant referee, and an unfailing support, full of wise and cheery helpfulness, as of old. Other Sisters from a distance came on short visits, and thus a constant intercourse was kept up with all Community interests, and seldom it happened but that her advice was sought in times of need. Her busy thoughts occupied themselves specially with all that was going on at Folkestone, and the starting S. Saviour's Mission near the Railway Arch owes a good deal to the energy she threw into the scheme. There were also constant visitors to whom she gave out her warm sympathy and her ever-ready counsel. But what most struck the Sister who watched by her, was the inward work she ceaselessly carried on by her life of intercessory prayer. "This," to quote her words,

"became a more and more strongly marked feature of her life, as increasing weakness compelled her to drop more and more of the outward life, and the state of her nerves frequently prevented her being even able to hear about things in which she took great interest. She often told me she felt herself she had done a more real work for GOD whilst sitting 'stuck to my chair,' than in all her busy, active, working years. And she would frequently say, 'Oh, how I have been praying for ——. All night long I was praying for ——. All the varied interests of the Community and its works, the passing political events of the day, specially those connected with Ireland, and still more events affecting the Church, all in turn filled her mind, and every thought was a prayer. Then individuals had each their place, and were never forgotten. The very last morning she was wheeled into the sitting-room she came holding her book of intercessions out to me, saying, 'I see my Novice's page is quite full, put in another sheet, dear, at once, that I may have room for their names.' On one occasion she was extremely anxious about two of her nieces, who were both most dangerously ill at the same time, and for days she said to me, 'Night and day I am praying for them; they are never out of my mind for a single minute.'"

It is not to be supposed that the intercourse which has been described as being kept up with those who came to unfold their difficulties or griefs to Mother Harriet, entailed no effort. She would limit the time during which she could sustain a conversation, not scrupling to say "it was enough," and that she needed rest. Latterly such visits often quite exhausted her, and towards the end, as the Sister above quoted says, she received them at extreme cost to herself,

so much so that she could not bear making appointments to see people. "No one knows," she would say, "the effort it is to me to think beforehand of speaking to them, or of feeling I must do so at a certain time." Often she was so overdone that tears would roll down her cheeks, but she would say, "Never mind, dear, I am so glad I was able to help — a little." Or at another time: "It is strange, but I felt I went just to the very point in her life where she needed help." Many who knew her will know what the feeling was of "the Mother" touching that point in their lives. "I can't think how it was, but the Mother's eyes seemed to look into me, and oblige me to unroll myself," was a not uncommon remark. It was very striking to observe the strength of mind that remained embodied in such an exceedingly enfeebled bodily frame; for her sayings were to the last uttered with her wonted energy and peculiar moral influence. One who had looked to her for occasional counsel when visiting her shortly before her death, was greatly struck with the vigour and animation of the last words she heard her speak.

"In replying to dear Mother's asking me how I did, (I had just recovered from an illness,) I said, 'So much better, thank you. I can feel glad to be alive now still to do God's will.' She said to me, 'There is something much better than that to live for. There is God's will to be done *in* you. You can never tell to what degree of holiness you may attain by His grace in you, and to what higher place prepared for you in Heaven you may come: how much more He may be glorified in you by your remaining here.' I am not sure that these were her very words, but they convey the impression which her words left on my mind."

It had been Mother Harriet's strong desire to visit Clewer once more before she died. The effort was made in the beginning of June, 1882. Being quite unable to bear the stir and movement of life at either of the Community Houses, she stayed with the author at S. John's Lodge, close by the House of Mercy. She remained through the month. During the interval since she had been at Clewer, the new Chapel of the House of Mercy had been built, as well as the Chapel and Refectories of S. Andrew's Hospital. She was able to go the round of these Houses, and also to see all the Sisters and other friends who desired to have a last sight of her, though often it was at the cost of much fatigue.

She stayed over the Feast of S. John Baptist, which is observed as a private Festival at the House of Mercy, and which closes with a general tea, at which the Sisters and Penitents are assembled together in the Recreation Ground. She was drawn in in her chair to be present at Vespers in the Chapel, and afterwards into the garden, at the general tea, at which she remained a short time. It was felt by all to be a real *Nunc Dimittis*, as she looked and saw how what she first had seen there as a "little one," had grown with years to be a great and growing number. But so accustomed were we to her enfeebled state, it was hardly realised, that this was to be the last Festival of the Patron Saint of the Community that she would celebrate on earth.

Chapter the Fourteenth.

THE LAST DAYS OF MOTHER HARRIET.

*"Therefore, in our hymn, we pray Thee,
Grant us, Blessed Trinity,
At the last to keep Thine Easter,
In our Home beyond the sky,
There to Thee for ever singing
Alleluia, joyfully."*

Hymns Ancient and Modern.

"My soul fleeth unto the Lord; before the morning watch."

WHILE on the one hand a fresh, young life had been growing up around Mother Harriet, and Homes forming with the closest spiritual ties, which were to her a constant interest and joy, on the other hand the circle of family relationships, always so fondly cherished, had gradually been narrowing, and links with the world within the veil increasing in number, year by year.

The sister who had been associated with her during the earlier period of her work at Clewer, the Hon. Mrs. Harris, died in 1865, of a fever caught while visiting among the poor in her husband's parish of Bremhill. Bishop Harris, in heart as in work so closely united with her, died in 1874; a chill which seriously affected him at Malta during his last

visitation along the coasts of the Mediterranean, having brought on an illness, under which he sank. Dr. Monsell, her husband's brother, who had moved from Egham to Guildford, died in the year 1875, having met with an accident, while superintending the works carried on in rebuilding his parish church, which became the immediate cause of a fatal disorder; and thus a home where she would often take a few days' rest to recruit her strength, was closed for ever. Her two sisters, Mrs. Martineau, and Miss O'Brien, died, the former in 1872, the latter in 1871. Her three elder brothers had died by the end of 1872, and thus one brother alone was left, with whom she kept up a loving intercourse to the last.

Mother Harriet had felt that her visit to Clewer, recorded in the last chapter, was her last effort; and she returned to Folkestone with the thankful feeling that what she had set her heart to do before she died, had been accomplished.

The Sister who had been her companion during the last year and a half, and who remained with her to the end, gives the following account of the brief interval between the return to Folkestone and her death.

"The last summer and autumn of her life are very bright and peaceful days to recall. She was for some time particularly well. The remembrance of her visit to Clewer was a source of unceasing pleasure. All the many old associations that were almost overpowering at the time, were reviewed with intense delight, as she sat in the bright little garden on lovely summer evenings, revelling in the glorious sunset tints on the sea, and watching the growth of S. Andrew's Convalescent Home on the opposite cliff.

"Many will remember the hours spent with her in those glowing autumn days; friends, relations, and Sisters coming for a little rest and sea-air, and a sight of 'old Mother.'

To strangers visiting the place for health or recreation, she would suggest some plan of amusement,—a hunt for fossils on the shore, or a picnic scramble in the Warren. ‘I love to see you enjoy yourselves,’ she would add, and half the enjoyment was telling her ‘all about what had been done.’

“The visits of Sisters from distant Houses were of the greatest interest to her,—and so accurately and distinctly did she grasp every detail, that once when I remarked, ‘You talk, Mother, as though you had been there last month, instead of years ago,’ she answered quickly, ‘Ah, child, it is burnt into my heart; my love for the Community prevents my forgetting anything.’

“The last days of Archbishop Tait occupied her thoughts very much all the autumn. She had kept up constant loving intercourse with the home life at Addington. She had very close relations with it through her cousin, Mrs. Tait, and she was of just the same age with the Archbishop. She would say, ‘I little thought when I resigned my office that I should outlive him.’

“The early part of the winter gave no special warning of decay of strength. Her mornings were still employed in reading, dictating letters, interspersing her rapid dictation (she never repeated a sentence) with bits of the newspaper, or a book read aloud, which she commented on in her quaint, pithy way. She received visits most days from people of various kinds, often seeking help or advice. She still took the same keen interest in the work going on around her, and often amused herself with ideal plans of work for herself. When eagerly listening to the details of the Sisters’ voyage on their Mission to Calcutta, she was greatly stirred, and pictured herself at Port Said, and dreamed of ending her days there, and being buried at Jerusalem. Another time,

when a fresh bit of home mission work was being undertaken by the Sisters, she sent for a shilling map, studied the *locale* with perfect care and remarked, 'I could walk straight to the place this minute, and wouldn't I be there pretty quickly too, if I could make myself go. They would have me popping in upon them in no time.' At the same time, while her mind was still so fresh and vigorous, there were many slight signs of the decrease of bodily powers, and the increase of the helplessness which was so distressing to her. One of the Sisters who saw her frequently remarked, 'Mother is more of the old lady this winter than ever before.' And it was so; she felt it herself, and often talked of what must be done when she was entirely helpless, dreading the thought of increasing infirmity.

"Christmas Day found her in bed with a heavy cold, and she had her Christmas Communion in her bedroom. But she was soon able to return to her sitting-room, and delighted in watching the snowdrops and crocuses appear in the little garden, and making plans for filling the beds. She continued to read a good deal, and liked to be read to all the evening. Dr. Pusey's last volume of Sermons, the 'Rule of S. Benedict' in an old French copy, 'The Faiths of the World' by Scotch Divines, and Montalembert's 'Monks of the West' were among the books then read."

A young friend whose accounts of her earliest intercourse with Mother Harriet have been already related, speaks of having been "permitted to be with her during the last weeks of the February of this year." She carefully noted what fell from her lips during those visits, "writing it down day by day after each conversation with her." These sayings have a special interest as being the last among the series of counsels which she was accustomed to give to

those who sought her aid. The following are extracts selected from the last notes then taken down, and kindly entrusted to the author :

“ People often waste all their energies in running about doing active work, and think that they serve GOD in this way, while all the time they utterly neglect the inner life of communion with Him, which alone makes their work worth anything in His sight. We must not rob GOD; we must give Him His due. Remember He has the first claim on our being; our aim must be to think of Him, to live for Him, to be always trying to please Him. The Divine Life must be shown forth in us. Our desire must be to manifest the life of GOD in our body, soul, and spirit; and to let others see that our lives are really given to GOD, and set apart for Him, whether living in the world or in a Sisterhood. This must be a great reality, there must be no mistake about it. Our work on earth must be simply this, to lead the holiest life we possibly can for GOD.

“ If we give ourselves to GOD without reserve, to live and work for Him, there is no doubt that He gives us special spiritual power. But if we wish for this power, we must keep in close communion with Him; we must keep regular times for prayer and meditation. It is well to have a timetable, for GOD will require an account of our time, and we must have order and method in the arrangement of the day. Set apart certain stated times for communion with GOD, and keep to them as much as possible. Let this come first, but this done, return to social life as easily and naturally as possible. Be merry and happy with all around you, and throw yourself heartily into whatever they are doing.”

Speaking of the unbelief of the present age, especially

among women, she said, "Remember it is one of the chief forms of temptation with which we have need to cope. It is a very sad one, destroying as it does all the peace and happiness of those who fall under its sway. But we must not judge them; we must pray for them earnestly, and try to help them by every means in our power. We never know what may have led them to give up Faith, perhaps secret trial or temptation of which we know nothing. God can bring them back in some way unknown to us, and in some illness or sorrow they may feel their need of Him, and turn to Him once more.

"Trial of any kind is very good for us. Sickness, loss of friends, inward crosses, which others know not of, all are sent to empty us of self, and to be emptied of self and filled with God is the greatest lesson we have to learn.

"When God finds this, He uses us for the finer, more spiritual part of the work. Those who are full of self, seeking praise, always thinking of self, He uses, but for the rougher parts of His work. We must try to be like fine instruments, polished and prepared, fit for the Master's use.

"We must also try to 'serve the LORD with all gladness.' Happiness and brightness in God's service is a great gift, and one that wins others to Him. We are told to 'make melody in our hearts to the LORD,' and how can we do this unless we are bright and cheerful, and serve Him gladly?

"What I want to impress upon you is, that you must *live* the *life*, not merely do the work. Live a quiet, peaceful life, alone with God, stayed on Him, and the work will come out of it. You will then do it simply, unconsciously. Try to keep yourself perfectly free, and ready for Him to use you."

One thing that distressed her much was the frequency

with which people often assured her, that others were not true, when they happened to differ from them.

"I cannot bear," she remarked, "to hear them say this. I always tell them it is only because they do not see things from the same point of view. We are like travellers going up a mountain, those higher up can see a very different view from those lower down."

Speaking of her favourite texts, she mentioned the following :

"Walk humbly with thy GOD."

"Not I, but CHRIST liveth in me."

"The LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth."

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

The following are the last words which Mother Harriet spoke to this young friend :

"I am glad you do not fear death. I believe you will feel even less dread of it as life goes on, not more, as some people tell you.

"I do not shrink from death. I know it may be painful, but I look upon it as the last trial to be gone through before reaching the glory which shall be hereafter, the blessedness of seeing GOD, the joy of being re-united with those I love.

"I have always seen the fear of death taken away very wonderfully at the last from those who had dreaded it all their lives.

"We must certainly often think of it, and pray for a holy, happy death, for we know not how suddenly it may come upon us, and we may then have but little time to prepare for it."

These last sentences are the more to be noted, because the fear at least of the act of death had formerly weighed

painfully on Mother Harriet's mind. She had been heard to observe, that finding in cases known to her how this fear had been removed with the advance of years, had helped to strengthen her against it.

By the end of February a great change had come, and as the month closed it became evident that the end was not far off.

Sunday was a day she had always delighted in. The feeling that "so much work for God was going on everywhere, so many souls being drawn in and sought after," possessed her. And her Sunday mornings had been always spent in prayer and reading. Pusey's "Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide," had occupied her every Sunday of this Lent. But on Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of her life on earth, when beginning the sermon for the day, she soon closed the book, saying, "I dare not read it, it is wiser not to try." The intense cold of the weather at this time greatly tried her.

The Sister whose account of these last days has been hitherto followed, thus continues the record of the last Holy Week :

"From Palm Sunday she became very feeble, and often suffered from difficulty of breathing. But there was as yet no thought of real alarm. Dr. Bowles saw her most days. Monday morning in Holy Week she was bright and fairly well, but later in the day I was struck with a peculiar look in her face, a look I had never seen before, and she said she felt 'so uncomfortable, that she did not know what to do, or what it meant.' I coaxed her to go to bed, and she went, though unwillingly, saying, 'I do not think I am very ill, but I shall never take up again what I put down.' The next morning she insisted on being dressed, and coming

into the sitting-room, but was so breathless, that after her dinner she went to bed, and never again left her bedroom.

"Yet there was no apprehension of her being likely then to die, only there was great general feebleness. She herself said the same, 'I do not think I am very ill; I have no pain; but I don't think I shall ever be better again, I have no power of rallying.'

"Maundy Thursday came, she had Celebration in her bedroom. She had had a special longing for her Maundy Thursday Communion. She said, 'I do not wish for another till it is my Viaticum.' She sent a special Easter message to the Sisters as to their revealing the mind of CHRIST. 'This,' she said, 'you know is the keynote of your whole life, and your Rule; without it your Rule is dead, for it is the very kernel of it, and as you all know, it has been the one aim and object of all my teaching.'

"On Good Friday morning Dr. Bowles came early, and for the first time was seriously alarmed, and said that there should be no delay in sending word to her relations, and to any who ought to come. He did not tell Mother Harriet what he thought, but on going to her after his visit, she said, 'I am much weaker to-day, and I quite know now that this is the beginning of the end. I am going home, leaving a very happy home here to go to a still happier one within the veil.' Then she added, 'I may yet rally, and if I do, I am well content to stay, but if I go, I am more than content to go.'

"One could see the shadow of death resting upon her, but stripped of all its terrors; and whilst in spirit she knelt at the foot of the Cross that day, her conformity with God's will was manifest. She was 'going,' as she said, 'to a well-known place, a familiar home.' 'I have gazed and gazed,'

she added, 'for thirty-three years at the land within the veil. I seem to have lived more truly there than here.' Another time she said, 'Easter Eve is to me such a special time; for thirty-three years my life has been one long Easter Eve of waiting.'"

"She then looked over all her directions, her little remembrances to various persons, her wishes about her funeral; making a few alterations and additions, and adding as to the funeral, 'Tell them it is to be really as you all like; I am quite indifferent about it.'

"Good Friday passed away very quietly; parts of the Offices, of the Night Hours, of the Lessons for the day, were read to her. She happened to observe that I was reading Père Thomas' 'Souffrances de JÉSUS-CHRIST,' and she said, 'That has been my morning reading book all the week; I should love to hear it now, but I had better not.' She then repeated the prayers which it had been her daily habit to say for years, very rapidly, without missing a word, and said, 'If I am unable to say prayers for myself, remember to say them for me.'

"Saturday morning, Dr. Bowles thought her pulse stronger, but she did not think herself any better. She was read to as usual, and all her letters were read to her. She then dictated two letters, her last bit of work in this world; and they were characteristic of the breadth and warmth of her sympathies, still fresh as ever. One was to a young lady, just engaged to be married to one of her nephews; it was full of the happiness of sanctified human love: the other was to a dear friend who had just lost her only child. This last spoke of thoughts of the still greater happiness, and the love awaiting us beyond the grave, touchingly adding, 'that she would look after her boy in Paradise.'

"All through that day there was a steady loss of power. She could sit up in her arm-chair only by being propped all round with pillows, but it was a relief, for from breathlessness and discomfort she was unable to remain any length of time in bed. But her mind was as clear and unclouded as ever, 'a mind at leisure from itself.' For one minute she talked, with joyful calmness, of 'going home,' and the next, entered into any trifling passing interest with her wonted keenness. She would settle what was to be done or not done in the arrangement of the house, or any matters of a passing kind, as though all were as usual. Easter cards, Easter flowers, letters full of Easter greetings, were constantly coming in, and were brought to her as usual. She was still able to take a good deal of nourishment, while feeling herself, I am sure, that she might die any moment. She told me to keep 'very close at hand.'

"She expressed a wish to see the Vicar. 'Don't put off very long, or it may be too late.' He came about five, and as he was repeating a hymn of Bonar's, to the lines 'Nearer the bound of life, where we lay our burden down,' she added, 'And nearer, my God, to Thee,' in a loud clear voice. As the Vicar bid her good-bye, she said to him, 'Easter is a lovely time to go home, is it not?'

"Shortly after two of the elder Sisters from the Mother House arrived. She was the first to hear of their arrival, and greeted them with as warm a welcome as ever, asking eager questions about everybody and everything at Clewer.

"We said the First Vespers for Easter Day. She joined joyfully, saying, 'I have been longing for those Vespers all day.' Dr. Bowles came late that evening, and found her settled in bed. She told him, she 'had no pain, only she was very, very tired.' She had a long talk with him; he

asked for his own sake that he might bring another doctor for consultation the next day. She at once assented, only wishing to know at what time, 'that we may not keep you waiting at all.' Though she had lost a great deal that day, there seemed no indication of immediate danger. But about 3.30 on Easter morning we found she could not swallow, though an hour before she had taken food readily. Soon after that she dropped asleep. The last thing she did before this was to arrange for the Blessed Sacrament to be brought to her on Easter morning, having before thought not to ask for It, lest it should 'give too much trouble at a busy time.'

"But she needed nothing now ; unconsciousness quickly came on, and she lay just breathing. The Vicar came about five. He prayed for her and with us, only leaving us a few minutes before six, when the church bells she loved so well rang out their joyous Easter peal. He went to ask for the prayers of the Church for her departing soul, and then returned, again to commend her spirit into the hands of her Heavenly FATHER, to Whom she passed at 6.30 a.m., as the early Easter communicants at the parish church close by were kneeling around the Altar, remembering her in their offerings of prayer. The little room, too, where we were kneeling seemed to us to be filled with the same blessing, the 'Peace that passeth all understanding.' The keynote of the day, the Resurrection Life, seemed already begun, for surely then for us 'death was swallowed up in victory.'" It happened this year, 1883, that the Festival of the Annunciation fell on the same day as the Festival of Easter.

On the following Friday the body was brought at an early hour into the church and laid before the Altar. After the Celebration, the Sub-warden of the Community being the

Celebrant, the long procession of relatives, Sisters, and other mourners, moved down the aisle, the coffin being preceded by the Cross-bearer, the choir and the clergy singing the special hymn from the Sisters' Office Book, beginning :

“ Sister, now thy toils are o’er,
Fought the battle, won the Crown,
On life’s rough and barren shore
Thou hast laid thy burden down ;
Grant her, LORD, eternal rest,
With the spirits of the blest.”

They bore her from the church to the spot which she had selected long before, close by the grave where the dearly-loved Sister Ethel, who had been her companion during the first five years and more of her illness, lay, the Warden of the Community and the Vicar of the parish sharing the last offices.

It happened that while the last rites of loving care were being paid, a gale of wind was blowing with scuds of rain. One looked from the scene of mourning beside the grave, during the wildness of the blast, on to the upland downs which are visible from the graveyard, all along the horizon, stretching towards the sea, so quiet, so unmoved, so verdant, and felt the contrast to be a very symbol of the life of her who was being committed to her last earthly home,—a life once so full of conflict, of toil, of suffering, and now passed to a rest so profound, so calm, on the bosom of her GOD, in “solid peace, peace secure and undisturbed, peace within and peace without, peace every way assured ;”¹ “a serenity of bliss whose very foundation is the immutability of GOD.”²

¹ Thomas à Kempis.

² The Abbé Perreyve, of his friend Frédéric Ozanam, p. 48.

The thought of mourning, of regret, seemed to be put to shame in the consciousness of what that rest must be to one who had borne so great a burden, and toiled with such unremitting activity under so great a strain.

But it was impossible not to feel a melancholy blank, when a life so large, so full, so bright, so sympathetic, was to be no more present, no more her animating voice to be heard, nor the kindling of her bright spirit to be consciously felt. What she had been to her own immediate relations and personal friends must necessarily be veiled to the outward eye, but she had become a presence to a wider world, a familiar object to an ever-widening circle that delighted in what might be enjoyed of passing intercourse with her. What, again, her life was to her Community, may be partially surmised from the records which have been given in this volume ; but words are a very feeble expression of the living force of personal communion, and though for the past seven years no charge or office belonged to her, such was her grasp of mind and her breadth of sympathy, that even withdrawn as she was from all share in the work, her influence was ceaselessly felt as a real power, and an ever bright encouragement.

The loving friend that wrote the "In Memoriam" in the *Guardian*, observed that "When the history of the revival of Sisterhoods in our Church is written, a golden page will be given to Mother Harriet." It is true. The more the question of Religious Communities for women is understood, (and it must become more and more a prominent idea in the mind of the English Church,) the more it will be seen, that the cause which she so deeply loved and so desired to further for the deepening of the life of the English Church, and the saving of its multitudes of lost souls,

has received an impulse from her wisdom, her singleness of purpose, her pure devotion, and her loving energy, which it is difficult to over-estimate. In the sense in which she would most truly desire the words to be fulfilled, it will be seen in this, as in other respects, that, resting from her labours, her 'works do follow' her.

This Memoir would be incomplete without some notice of what she was accustomed to write as helps to prayer and meditation, though they did not assume to be more than passing suggestions. Her mind was intensely practical, and when she thus cursorily wrote it was only for immediate use, but there is very much, treasured by those whom she thus helped, which illustrates her line of thought and tone of feeling. It is often not possible to distinguish what thoughts were her own, or what were copied from books she happened to have been reading. But her selections from others' writings still speak her own mind.

It will be a not unfit close to these records of her life and character, to give in an Appendix a few passages from these various compilations, which enter into her secret communion with GOD, and show how she sought to deepen and further the aspirations of those who came within her influence.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE ET IN LUCE ÆTERNÂ.

APPENDIX.

IN the foregoing narrative it has been mentioned how Mother Harriet was accustomed to help some of the Sisters, suggesting simple thoughts for meditation, and often writing them out with her own hand in their Manuals of Devotion. Some of these suggestions are here given as a sample of the kind of help she would thus provide for them. It is uncertain how far they may have been her own ideas, how far derived from what she had read. It is probable that they were the mixed results of her own thoughts and of what she gathered from various sources. Her reading was of a very promiscuous kind, and she rapidly caught ideas from the different means of instruction within her reach.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDITATION FROM ADVENT TO EASTER.

November 18.

Contemplate this week the perfect life of man with GOD before the Fall, the simple unity, in contrast with the multiplicity that distracts us,—man in the image of GOD, possessing all things in GOD. Begin the life of mortification by resolving to put away these causes of distraction and multiplicity.

November 23.

Contemplate the immediate effect of sin in the creature's relation to GOD. GOD the Unchangeable called to Adam, man hid himself from GOD, went away from GOD. This is the effect of sin in us,—it drives us away from GOD, we hide ourselves from GOD. True penitence is the child-like return to GOD, putting aside all excuses, going straight back to GOD. Seek diligently to find out the sin, the self-indulgence, the self-gratification, the faithlessness, the unbelief, that makes us hide ourselves from GOD, and having found it take it to GOD in humble contrition. "Fear not," the child's return is the FATHER'S truest joy.

November 30. S. Andrew's Day.

Contemplate the nearness to GOD attained by the Old Testament Saints, and the special virtues wrought out in them through their nearness. Fix on one Old Testament character to be your special study and example. Gather up the memory of the past year, and see what one thing it is that mars your Christian life which you feel most unwilling to give up, and take that as the one object of mortification for Advent.

First Week in Advent.

Contemplate our LORD JESUS CHRIST voluntarily leaving the Home of His FATHER in Heaven to come down to unite Himself with the creature of His own creation, to be one with man. Contemplate Him condescending to our utmost nothingness, yet preserving, in the minutest details, the calm repose and dignity of the Godhead. Try to rise up to the contemplation of our LORD'S perfect Example by considering some one or more of His servants who foreshadowed Him. Would not Abraham's character, contemplated in its yielding humility, its strong practical faith, learned through an experience of his own weakness, and the spirit of sacrifice, help you to use and grasp more fervently the standard of His own life?

Second Week in Advent.

Contemplate the Blessed Virgin, a vessel of election, chosen of GOD. Her early life before the call came, in its simplicity. Her unstartled acceptance of the vocation, taking it up with prompt readiness. Her view of the power of lowliness by which to attain the regard of GOD. Her full consciousness of the glory of the call, the graces that led to her wonderful exaltation. View in this light your own call, yourself as a vessel of election. Renew the acceptance of your vocation, forming it on the model of hers. Believe in the glory of your call, and joy in it. Renew life by going deeper down into the valley of humiliation, that GOD may lift you up.

Third Week in Advent.

Contemplate the profound humiliation and annihilation of the GOD-Man, made one with the simplicity and child-like humility of the Blessed Virgin. Ask much grace and light to penetrate this great mystery. Humility coming down from GOD, and humility rising up from the creature, and this the means chosen for the accomplishment of the great ideal of life. What a lesson for us! How earnestly should we seek to lay it as the foundation of our work!

Christmas Week.

JESUS is come. The humility of the GOD-Man meets the humility of the creature, raising and sustaining it. He comes to you as to the Blessed Virgin: a union with JESUS based on humility. Within thee is enclosed the Divine Life of Humiliation, and thou art enclosed in the Divine Life of Love.

First Week of the New Year.

Contemplate JESUS as the "Prince of Peace." "He is our Peace." "My Peace I give unto you." Measure your life by this standard,—is it peace? Peace in all its inward workings. What hinders this perfect peace? JESUS was circumcised for us.

He bore the suffering of the flesh that we might learn to apply the knife of circumcision to everything in our flesh that hinders peace. This week weigh well in detail all your inward hindrances to perfect peace, and resolve in this year to overcome each one in detail.

Epiphany.

“Arise, shine, for thy Light is come.” Dwell on each of these words,—arise—shine—Light is come. It is a call for an enlargement of faith, that faith which is the truest humility. We need to be humble in order to arise. The shining requires the sanctity of humility. The Light came in a degree of lowliness far beyond aught we can conceive.

Sexagesima.

Will it not be helpful to contemplate now the perfection of man as first created, and his life with GOD : and the perfection we may attain even now, through the Incarnation, in our fallen humanity,—if we diligently set ourselves to purge away each hindrance, great and small, to the life with GOD—the marvelous life of union that may be ours even here? Dwell on S. Paul’s vision and its effects upon him,—he was as you are, and he was perfected through much suffering.

Quinquagesima.

Hear our LORD saying to thee, “What wilt thou?” all through this week, and have faith to say, What Thou wilt ; and love to fulfil what thou dost ask. How easy to write, how difficult to attain.

First Week in Lent.

Going into the wilderness alone with GOD for forty days : yield yourself up to desire, even in the midst of active life, to be alone with GOD. Take two points to contemplate,—

1st. GOD’s Love.

2nd. Your sins against that Love.

Second Week in Lent.

GOD gave His well-beloved SON to humiliation,—the SON shrank not from accepting the humiliation. The soul in union with GOD must yield itself up to be humbled.

Third Week in Lent.

Hope and progress. By faith we have grasped a life of repose above the clouds and trials of this lower world, a life of repose in GOD—in a will conformed to the will of GOD. Hardly have we done so when our faith is sorely tested—trials without, far sorer trials within—till we have well-nigh sunk—till hope comes in to our aid and bids us look on, look above, try yet again, make progress. All will yet be well,—we are but being fitted to reach the land we have attained by faith. GOD give you at this time the good spirit of Hope, that you may have courage to reach the haven where you would be—attained even here through the repose of faith and the quietness of humility.

Fourth Week in Lent.

Love and adoration. By Faith and Hope the soul attains to Love ; “GOD is Love.” “We love Him because He first loved us.” By the daily death of self, love is nurtured in the soul. Love is the test of progress in the Divine Life. The expression of love is adoration, the homage of the soul to the Source of all love.

Holy Week.

The drawing of the soul within the Passion of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, uniting oneself, or being united, with Him in the Passion through sharing His humiliation. He wrought all His work through self-humiliation ; we must grow like Him in this.

Easter.

The soul humbled before GOD having with true faithfulness sought to die to self, to lay self down in the grave of the Crucified, rises up to newness of life. As you have been united to JESUS in His suffering life, go forth fearlessly, with good courage along the path of the Risen Life. Fear not, JESUS is with you, though hidden, yet He will appear manifesting Himself as and how He wills. Faith has but to say, I know He is near, I know I love Him, because He has loved me with such an amazing love. And so let the soul in the trustingness of love repose on its LORD'S love and be satisfied—still—in the marvellous rest of the confidence of Love.

Low Sunday.

“Peace be unto you ; My peace I give unto you.” Cherish this peace, here is what your soul needs. If it could but hear, and hearing respond, all would be well. “Peace,” it is the death of self, and the abiding Presence of GOD in the soul.

Second Sunday after Easter.

The expectation of the soul of the manifestation of JESUS. His quiet coming near to the waiting soul in the midst of the ordinary duties of life—the faithful soul quick to discern His Presence. Seek a living faith that JESUS will so manifest Himself to your soul, and lay aside all the excuses and doubtings of mistrust as a want of true humility.

WHITSUNTIDE, AND ROGATION DAYS.

Whitsun Day.

The Days of Pentecost are accomplished, the figurative Pentecost is passed, the mystery is accomplished, the HOLY GHOST descends to take possession of redeemed man.

The SON of GOD has by His meritorious suffering won from the love of GOD the FATHER the great Pentecostal gift,—the Spirit of Love, the Bond of Love, of the Triune GOD, the Person of the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter.

The hour fixed from all eternity is come, and suddenly is heard a rushing mighty wind, filling all the house, and on the waiting expectant disciples descend the tongues of fire ; they sit upon each of them, filling them with the vigour and the repose of the dove-like Spirit of GOD.

Each tongue of fire, a power from on high,—a wondrous illumination, a burning desire, a fervent love, a Divine utterance, wherewith to proclaim the mighty mystery of man's redemption, of the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST, of the transforming power by which man is taken up into GOD, dwells in GOD, and GOD in him, and becomes on earth through the power of the HOLY GHOST a simple revelation of the Life, the Love, the Unity of Him Who is our Life.

“ Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”—Ezekiel xxxvii. 9.

“ I will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them : yea, I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people.”—Ezekiel xxxvii. 26, 27.

Whitsun Monday.

Let us contemplate the mission of the HOLY GHOST to guide us into all truth. “ He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak.”

The FATHER is the Source of all ; the SON co-eternal with the FATHER ; the SPIRIT Co-eternal with the FATHER and the SON, proceeding forth from both. JESUS saith, "All things that the FATHER hath are Mine ;" and, "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." The HOLY GHOST completes the teaching of the SON.

Through the tongues of fire, the face of the earth is renewed ; "Go ye into all the world," with this ineffable gift of GOD, the sevenfold gifts of the HOLY GHOST, the seven energies of sanctifying grace, renew the image of GOD in the soul, shedding abroad the love of GOD in our hearts, sealing us with the earnest of the Spirit on our heads as the anointed of GOD, forming in us the life of CHRIST. Thus let us go forth day by day on our mission of Divine Love.

Come, O HOLY SPIRIT, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle within them the fire of Thy Love.

"GOD anointed JESUS of Nazareth with the HOLY GHOST and with power."—Acts x. 38.

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of GOD. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."—2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4.

Whitsun Tuesday.

Let us contemplate the formation of the Church. On that little band in the upper chamber descends the fire of the HOLY GHOST, and through the transforming power of the HOLY GHOST sends them forth firm, valiant, living witnesses to the risen and ascended JESUS, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The mysteries of the Incarnate Life, which they had beheld all the years they companied with JESUS, they have now by the operation of the HOLY GHOST to proclaim and reveal.

Filled with the Divine gift of language, multitudes of all nations heard the word, and believed and were added to the Church. The seed of the Precious Blood began to grow, and

the Church as a real spiritual kingdom was established in the world. Men were baptized with the baptism of the HOLY GHOST. "In the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST." To her was given the power of communicating Divine Grace, of revealing Divine Truth, of administering Sacraments of Divine power. The whole treasury of Grace lay in the Apostolic life of the Church, springing out of the mighty Pentecostal gift, filling it with the undying Life of the Eternal SPIRIT.

And such too is our individual life. We live under the operation of the HOLY GHOST, indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT, the temple of the living GOD, the instrument of the glory to be revealed.

Our prayer united to the moaning of the Heavenly Dove, is one long life of prayer—ever ascending to the FATHER'S throne. In union with the intercession of JESUS, we have but to ask, to receive.

The union of the creature with the Creator is perfected. The SON is glorified, the HOLY GHOST is come, and we pass on into the mysteries of the transformed man, the Life in GOD. To manifest the power and energy of the Divine Life. To prepare for the second coming of our LORD.

Here let us pause to gaze on the finished work of JESUS. Redeemed man walks again with GOD in an entire confidence of love.

Let us not turn aside from this weight of glory to a consciousness of our own nakedness, to spending our energies in sewing fig leaves together to hide ourselves from GOD, but with a contrite heart and adoring love to pass on into the presence of our GOD, and yield ourselves up to be transformed by the power of the HOLY GHOST into the Body of CHRIST, filling up the suffering that He has left in His treasury of love, that we with the Captain of our Salvation may be made perfect through suffering, and through Him may have access by One Spirit to the FATHER, and be builded together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are

the children of GOD. And if children then heirs ; heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Rom. viii. 16, 17.

“Ye shall receive power after that the HOLY GHOST is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me.”—Acts i. 8.

Rogation Days.

A season for solemn, steadfast prayer,—an asking time. “Every good gift and every perfect gift” is at our command, it “cometh down from the Father of Lights,”—ask, and it is yours. “JESUS ever liveth to make intercession.” “The Spirit intercedeth with groanings that cannot be uttered.” GOD’S work is perfect. We must do ours ; we must by our own act unlock the treasure-house ; we must ask ere we receive ; we must make our prayers, even in infirmity, such that the Spirit may make intercession for us.

Every good gift,—gift of Life, gift of Love, gift of Prayer, gift of Healing, gift of Virtue, gift of Grace, gift of the HOLY SPIRIT,—all are ours. Have we asked them ? Are we asking ? Is there not large room for contrition ?

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Thus our intercessory prayer is a call to deepen our spiritual life. All things are ours through JESUS CHRIST, and by the power of the HOLY GHOST. “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your FATHER that speaketh in you.”

Let us rise up to the consciousness of the omnipotence of prayer as we each say “Our FATHER,” “JESUS, mercy.”

In the least lifting up of our hearts with fervour and a pure intention GOD is glorified, prayer is heard. The omnipotence of Divine Love will accomplish the rest.

Let us have some fixed objects for our abiding intercession which we may increase from time to time, such as this :—

1. The conversion of sinners.
2. The return of souls to GOD, the restoration of grace to those who have lost it.

3. Gifts of grace and illumination to the Heathen, Jews, Mahomedans, Infidels.
4. Great cities sunk in sin, blinded by wealth and worldliness, oppressed by ignorance and poverty, crime, &c.
5. All in temptation—from self, from pride, from intellect, from worldliness.
6. The dying at this moment, those about to die, the departed, mourners, our own hour of death.
7. All souls consecrated to GOD, Bishops, Priests, Religious, Missionaries.
8. Schools, colleges, institutions.
9. All in spiritual or temporal peril.
10. All in loneliness,—all who have none to pray for them.
11. All who pray for us, personal friends.
12. Our benefactors, our homes, our relations.
13. Widows, orphans, sick, friendless.
14. Our enemies, those who injure us.
15. Soldiers, sailors, labourers, artisans, servants.
16. Lawyers, judges, prisoners, convicts.
17. Those in high places and authority.

Special intercession for our own Community, and those bound up with us in a common life, and those committed to our care.

Those on whom our acts and words have influence.

1. Religious Orders,—Confessors.
2. All aiming at perfection.
3. Apostates from the Faith, or Religious Orders.
4. All who dishonour their vocation by sloth, laziness, worldliness, ambition, weakness, self-love, shrinking from humiliation, self-delusion, flattery, and contempt.

OCTAVE OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

I.

Let us contemplate the holiness of the life of S. John Baptist, —the child of aged parents, both righteous, “walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the law, blameless.” Sanctified—the effect of original sin stayed within him—even in his mother’s womb.

Contemplate him in the desert in converse with GOD, his soul filled with a burning love of holiness, with an abiding vision of JESUS, as “the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,” the nearness of the Divine Child always flooding his soul with light.

Would we enter into the life of S. John Baptist, and unite with him in adoration and thanksgiving for our vocation, we must with him give ourselves to a life of earnest penitence, of mortification, of retirement, of generous love, of closest union with our GOD.

“The righteous LORD loveth righteousness, His countenance will behold the thing that is just.”

“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”

“Holiness becometh Thine House for ever.”

II.

Let us contemplate the child who was elected from everlasting to be the Precursor of our LORD; his great destiny, none greater than he. “A man sent from GOD whose name was John,”—named by the angel Gabriel, the messenger of GOD, John (filled with grace)—coming in the spirit and power of Elias, the dawn of the Sun of the Gospel, dispelling the shadows of the obscure night of the ancient law.

Consider his profound humility,—retiring into solitude, after the example of Moses and Elias, that he might acquire the perfection of sanctity, and be worthy to point out the CHRIST to sinners, by the entire mortification and sacrifice of self.

What but the power of humility and meekness of a mortified self, won through "vigils of contemplation, of praise and prayer," could have thus prevailed with souls dead in trespasses and sins?

Would we win souls to repentance, would we bear witness to JESUS, and reveal the Light of the World, we must chasten our souls in solitude and silence.

III.

Let us contemplate S. John Baptist sent of GOD to prepare the way of the Incarnate SON. To point out the Lamb of GOD, to tell sinners of the love of GOD manifested in CHRIST JESUS, the highest mission the soul is capable of.

Contemplate his virgin life, his abstinence, his mortification, his prayer, his silence, his recollection, flying from the world, rich in his poverty. What an example of virtue, what a model of detachment to Religious, specially to us who are called by his name to work under the banner of this saint, so pre-eminent for his detachment from the world. 2 Samuel xxiii. 4, 5.

IV.

Let us contemplate S. John Baptist as the Voice crying in the desert,—the Voice by which the Eternal FATHER makes known the Word. The Voice preaching with bold confidence and power, at the court as in the wilderness, its austere message of purity unmoved by any human respect.

The voice of greatness and the voice of humility, the voice of justice and the voice of confession, the voice of faith and the voice of love,—such is the voice that must still live on in us. The days of preparing for our GOD are not yet ended, we have not yet reached the final triumph of the Lamb. Let us give thanks that we are called to tell souls of the love of the Eternal Word, Whose Voice thrills through us as its moan is heard, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

V.

Let us contemplate the wonderful mystery of the Baptism of JESUS. JESUS comes to the Baptist,—comes with others as one of them,—the Baptist shrinks back overwhelmed with the sense of his own nothingness, yet he acts in obedience to the Divine Word. “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” Faith accepts the Messiah,—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,”—the water has touched the sacred Body of JESUS, and become the source of supernatural life.

In this new creation the Trinity wills to be revealed. The dove-like Form manifests the holiness of the Emmanuel. The voice of the love of the Eternal FATHER proclaims, “This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased,” and the SON Himself, obedient to the Divine law, fulfils all righteousness.

JESUS ascending from the water raises up with Himself the world regenerated,—sanctified, created anew in Himself,—and he that was dead is made alive in Him for evermore.

“The voice of the LORD is upon the waters, the GOD of glory thundereth ; the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful ; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.”—Ps. xxix. 3, 4.

VI.

Let us contemplate the death of S. John Baptist. His life was a revelation of humility and duty, his death a witness to the purity of the Law of GOD. “It is not lawful,” are his bold words to the king, which cost him his life. He who is “a burning and a shining light” must bear witness to the Light by his life and seal it by his death.

Dwell on the love of JESUS for S. John Baptist. When He heard he was put in prison He departed into Galilee ; when He heard of his death He withdrew into loneliness. See in this that the greatest purity, the most perfect life, sanctifies human affections and consecrates them to GOD. Let us gather carefully the

lessons of his life and death, dying at the desire of a sinful woman, a most obscure end permitted of GOD for this famous saint, that our light may shine as his light, and we, in these days of darkness and unbelief, may, in the retirement of our hidden life, shine as lamps burning before our GOD.

VII.

We have contemplated S. John Baptist in the marvellous purity of his miraculous life. Dwell on the mystery of love to us contained in these words of JESUS, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." S. John was marked by a special vocation, "Among those that are born of women none greater than he." We, too, have been by special vocation called into closest and most perfect union with our LORD, we are made one with Him in Sacramental union. We are the temples of the living GOD. Conscious of the dignity of our vocation, what reverent repose, what still watchfulness, what tender bearing, what abiding adoration should mark our lives. "To whom much is given, of them shall much be required." Have we not much given to us? Is it not our glory and our joy? Let us make sure that in that day when He comes to "make up His jewels," and to be "admired in all them that believe," the "much given" will still be our glory and our joy.

VIII.

Let us contemplate the great work of S. John Baptist,—the preaching of repentance, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Prepare ye the way of the LORD." The kingdom of GOD is within you, saith the LORD, but not yet are the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our GOD and of His CHRIST; not yet is the accuser of our brethren cast down, which accuseth them night and day before GOD; not yet has the Bride made herself ready to enter in to the marriage supper of the Lamb; not yet has He that is Faithful and True, with His garments dipped in Blood, the Word of GOD, the King of

kings and LORD of lords, entered into the New Heavens and the New Earth.

The voice calling to repentance must still be heard, and our blessed work must still be to "prepare the way of the LORD," to make straight in the desert a highway for our GOD. Let us earnestly seek for the sanctity of S. John Baptist, that we may be found worthy of our great work, of our beautiful vocation.

FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF S. PAUL.

Let us contemplate Saul in his fierce vehemence, standing to receive the clothes of those who stoned the gentle martyr.

Saul who at this moment was, in the counsels of the Eternal Trinity, a "chosen vessel" to bear the Name of JESUS to the Gentiles and before kings, and to the children of Israel: a mighty mission of Divine love to be confided to His persecutor.

What gentleness in our judgment of others should we learn here!

See Saul in his wild course arrested by the tenderness of the voice of JESUS, "Why persecutest thou Me?" and mark the child-like attitude of his converted soul, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Trace the lines of Providential care, and see him passing through his three days' agony of doubt and fear and blindness, and the token of his conversion given to the messenger of GOD, "Behold, he prayeth," and the message, "I will show him what great things he must suffer for My Name's sake."

The transformed Paul, obedient to the Divine attraction, goes on his wondrous mission in a life of perfect sacrifice, his character elevated, magnanimous, heroic, yet gentle, loving, fervent, generous, daily dying, that "the life of JESUS" might be revealed, and shed its sweet fragrance around him with its constraining love and winning attraction.

Nor does the active life mar the contemplative. What was the vision of GOD vouchsafed to him when caught up into the third heaven? What *may* be the vision of GOD vouchsafed to the soul whose abiding cry in the midst of the fulfilment of the active duties of life is, "Show me Thy glory?" And what in His Love may be the blessed assurance given to the soul of a crown of glory laid up for it in the treasure-house of GOD? "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in My Name He may give it you." (S. John xv. 16.)

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Late Rector of Clewer, Hon. Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Warden of the House of Mercy, Clewer.

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